



HISTORY'S STRONGEST SENIOR BROTHER

BOOK 01

August Eagle

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

History's Strongest Senior Brother

(史上最强师兄)

by

August Eagle

(八月飞鹰)

Synopsis

The first time Yan Zhaoge crossed worlds, he landed in a martial warrior civilization that was at the peak of prosperity. He ended up in the book storage building of the the Divine Palace, which collected and preserved the classics of the entire world from all fields of knowledge. However, a world class calamity struck soon after and even the Divine Palace was destroyed.

Yan Zhaoge's soul once again crossed over, but this time he arrived in the same world, except countless years have passed.

With his brain full of rare books and classics from the era of peak prosperity, Yan Zhaoge's second crossing over to the present era was like a gamer who was used to playing hell mode suddenly finding himself playing the game on easy.

That was just way too awesome.

But before that, he needs to fix a certain problem.

“I'm not a main character? In fact, I'm actually the main character's love rival and the antagonistic Mr. Perfect senior martial brother? This script is wrong!”

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English Translation by incarneous @ [Incarneous Wordpress](#), Meh
@ [Volare Novels](#)

ePub conversion by Lisa Hayes @ [Hasseno Blog](#)

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Book 1 - Counterattack of the Senior Brother

HSSB 1: I Got The Wrong Script!

Central Heaven Region, Heaven Domain, Eight Extremities World.

Outside Broad Creed Mountain, one of the Sacred Grounds of the present era, Yan Zhaoge stood with a black-trimmed blue robe worn over white clothes. This outfit declared his identity as one of Broad Creed Mountain's coremost disciples.

Across from him stood an unconvinced and dissatisfied youth in yellow clothing, "Yan Zhaoge, aren't you just blessed with having a good father? Do you really think you are better than me?"

Yan Zhaoge replied expressionlessly, "What did you just say? Say it again if you dare."

"I'll say whatever I want. You think I'm scared of you? Don't you just freaking have a good father?"

Yan Zhaoge stared at the yellow-clad youth and suddenly burst out laughing, "Very good, exactly that sentence. I just love it when people say that about me."

The yellow clad youth was struck speechless.

After a long while, finally managing to regain his senses, his embarrassment quickly turned into rage. Without caring about the consequences, he jumped at Yan Zhaoge.

Completely indifferent, Yan Zhaoge stated, “Restrain your blows and don’t kill him.”

The yellow clad youth faltered mid-action. Then, he felt his entire body go numb as his vision distorted drastically. A long while later, having regained his senses, he discovered that someone had soundlessly grabbed him by the small of his back and lifted him high into the air.

A very burly man appeared before Yan Zhaoge with one hand holding the yellow clad man high in the air, as if he were a tiny child.

The large man was all smiles as he said, “Young Master, please go ahead.”

Yan Zhaoge simply nodded. Folding his hands behind his back, he leisurely turned and left.

The large man laughed cheekily while still holding the yellow-clad youth with only a single arm. The youth could only wait.

Yan Zhaoge entered the main gate of his sect. Walking along, the smugness he displayed earlier had already disappeared without a trace. His expression had become completely tranquil.

At first glance, he appeared to possess a calm and steady demeanor.

But the truth behind his current state was...

He was absolutely stupefied.

“This script is wrong.” Yan Zhaoge muttered to himself. As a member of the so-called crossing worlds army, something must had gone wrong with his crossing over.

His first crossing of worlds landed him in a foreign world with a martial practitioner civilization at the peak of prosperity. He ended up in the book storage building of the Divine Palace, which collected classic martial manuals of all kind from all over the world.

However, soon after, there was a world-shaking calamity that destroyed even the Divine Palace.

What followed then was actually an unexpected second crossing over, where his soul arrived in the same world except countless years later.

At this point, people had discovered remnant martial legacies that had survived the calamity and, with the help of those, re-established a martial practitioner civilization. This new civilization was still in its growth period and far from the previous peak.

With his brain full of rare classic martial manuals from the era of

peak prosperity, Yan Zhaoge's second crossing over to the present era was like a gamer who was used to playing hell mode suddenly finding himself playing the game on easy mode.

That was just way too awesome.

The only problem with the second crossing of worlds was the terrible mess that had been left behind by the original owner of his body.

"Young Master, the things you wanted us to gather have all been readied," the large burly man had once again caught up, "Information on the location of a 'Li Flame True Fire' fire seed has also been found."

Yan Zhaoge slightly slowed his pace, "This information is indeed hard to come by. Has the precise location been confirmed?"

"It is the northeastern part of the Dragon Sealing Abyss. The search area is already been narrowed down as much as possible. It won't take long for our people to send back news of a more precise location," the large man replied with a simple laugh.

"Not bad; not bad," Yan Zhaoge nodded in satisfaction.

Not only was Yan Zhaoge's father an important elder of the clan with a lot of authority, he was also the current patriarch of the Yan family, which was an illustrious and influential greater family whose fame resounded across the entire continent. Those who

called Yan Zhaoge Young Master as opposed to junior or senior apprentice-brother were all subordinates of the Yan family.

If Yan Zhaoge wanted something, he only needed to send out a list and there would naturally be subordinates to carry out the task.

In other words, the current Yan Zhaoge was of high class birth with a super powerful dad, also being a genius himself. Everything being so perfect, things should only be smooth sailing from there on out.

But... something didn't seem right.

“Young Master, there is one more thing-” the burly attendant had wanted to say something else, but his words were suddenly cut off.

A middle-aged man with a heavily profound aura walked towards them. Each step seemed to shake the world around him.

Once he neared, he and Yan Zhaoge exchanged proper etiquette. The middle-aged man said with a slight smile, “It’s only been a few days; junior apprentice-nephew Yan’s cultivation seems to progress daily.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled and replied, “Skill from diligence; incompetence from indulgence. I dare not slack off.”

The middle-aged man said, “These days, abnormalities have surfaced in the Sealing Dragon Abyss. Therefore, we are preparing to send someone to investigate, namely some younger generation disciples. It so happens that the clan’s youth competition has just concluded; the clan wants to send the eight top ranked disciples along to give them an opportunity to train.”

“It’s just that, according to rumors, your old rival is also in the vicinity of the Sealing Dragon Abyss. If junior apprentice-nephew Yan isn’t busy in the near future, why don’t you lead them on this mission?”

He stared at Yan Zhaoge with eyes full of expectation and admiration.

The youth in front of him possessed extraordinary talent; he was a true Heaven’s chosen son. He was a well known figure and an acknowledged leader amongst those of his age, the pride of Broad Creed Mountain’s younger generation.

Only geniuses among geniuses, those geniuses that stood out the most prominently above the heads of the other members of their generation in the absolute best clans of the Eight Extremities World could compare to him. They were evildoers, freaks, and people who stood so far above the masses they no longer seemed human.

In the current era, there were Four Young Masters who were renowned across the entire Eight Extremities World. One of them was the Broad Creed Young Master Yan Zhaoge. Acknowledged by the masses as a handsome youth of outstanding ability, it was said

that so long as he did not die early, he would definitely create a new legend.

“Dragon Sealing Abyss...” Yan Zhaoge pondered for a bit before accepting right on the spot, “Since I don’t have any important matters on hand, I might as well make this trip. I will naturally look after my junior apprentice-brothers and sisters a bit.”

Yan Zhaoge understood what the other man meant. There were strong members of the junior generation from other clans also lurking near the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

If the clan’s disciples were suppressed during an encounter between the younger generation, it would be a blow to the clan’s face.

On the other hand, if a senior apprentice-uncle led the squad, the younger generation obviously wouldn’t be bullied; but conversely, this would also weaken the prestige and influence of the clan’s younger generation.

As for Yan Zhaoge himself, he would happily leave the clan more often. After all, to him, this being a whole, entirely new world, he wanted to corroborate it with the memories in his mind.

He would also have had to go on an expedition to the Dragon Sealing Abyss sooner or later, since some of his plans required its unique environment. Therefore, this time, he would just conveniently go along.

The middle aged man became even jollier after Yan Zhaoge accepted his request, “During this outing, junior apprentice-nephew Yan can also act as an example for the younger generation. I believe they will learn many things as a result.”

After taking leave of the middle aged man, Yan Zhaoge continued on his way. The burly man followed beside him and resumed their earlier discussion, “Young Master, earlier, I wanted to tell you that Miss Lin’s secluded cultivation has apparently been extended. She will not be coming out as scheduled.”

In his opinion, his master should react with regret and dissatisfaction after hearing this news.

However, in reality, Yan Zhaoge, at this time, had the urge to roll his eyes.

This was the terrible mess left to him by his body’s original owner.

During a past training trip, the original owner of this body met a girl.

The girl originally had a childhood friend who also happened to be her sweetheart. However, upon meeting the perfect Yan Zhaoge of that time, she became moved. For the sake of a brighter future, she left her original sweetheart.

Even though the original owner of this body did not intentionally

seduce the girl, he would also not refuse any beautiful girl who offered herself to him. This led to the strong resentment of the girl's commoner ex-boyfriend.

The difference between the body's original owner and the commoner boy was too large. He did not suppress or make things difficult for the boy, not even bothering to consider his hostility as anything.

The girl's martial talent was truly unusual. Originally, she was like a pearl gathering dust in a small corner of the world, but once she followed the body's original owner to Broad Creed Mountain and became a disciple, her cultivation grew by leaps and bounds.

Sometime after she became a disciple, the girl went into secluded cultivation and it was at that time that Yan Zhaoge experienced his second crossing over, taking over his current body.

Admittedly, the girl was undeniably a top class beauty.

She was a beautiful and graceful maiden whom even a prince would desire. However, to the current Yan Zhaoge, that was all she was. While her visage was pleasing and warmed the heart, he had no particular feelings toward her.

The Great Calamity he experienced during the first crossing over and the sight of the Divine Palace being destroyed was eternally etched in Yan Zhaoge's mind.

Even the immeasurably mighty Divine Palace could be destroyed; in this world, who could stay safe and sound forever?

Some people would fall into despair after witnessing that scene, falling into desolation and coming to live day by day while totally ignoring what lay ahead. However, Yan Zhaoge's choice was different. He chose to work hard and strengthen himself.

Even though it was ridiculously overpowered, with his own starting point being extraordinary, his background being amazing, and his subordinates being innumerable, Yan Zhaoge still eagerly treasured every single bit of resource available. He spent all of it on strengthening himself, not wasting any of it whatsoever.

He made the most of every minute and every second.

This had already become his natural instinct.

In the time after his second crossing over, Yan Zhaoge progressively got used to his new identity and environment. As the days passed, he adapted to the people and things around him. However, some things still could not be changed.

To him, the most important thing was to cultivate rigorously, without wasting his superior environment and circumstances.

In this world where the martial path reigned supreme, the might of a single individual could potentially decide the fate of the entire world. Only strength was respected. Only the victor was king.

But then Yan Zhaoge had discovered that things were not as simple as they seemed.

At that time, the large man beside him just happened to mention, “Young Master, other than Miss Lin’s matter, I have also investigated Ye Jing.

“Currently sixteen years of age. A citizen of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, East Heaven Region, Heaven Domain. Both his parents died when he was three years old. He was fostered by relatives. Because he grew up relying on his relatives’ charity, he was bullied.”

“He was an ordinary person without any unusual traits. His martial talent was completely average. Except for the fact he grew up together with Miss Lin, there was nothing else worth noting.”

“However, after you left together with Miss Lin, he underwent remarkable changes. His cultivation soared and his performance became dazzling. First he stabilized his own position within his family, then he helped it grow stronger and suppress its opponents.”

“Leaving home, he headed to the capital of the Eastern Tang Kingdom and achieved considerable fame amongst the younger generation. As a result, he obtained the right to participate in the Broad Creed Mountain’s disciple selection exam.

“After successfully passing the exam and joining Broad Creed

Mountain as a disciple, his momentum has seemingly been stronger than even Miss Lin's. His performance has been very outstanding."

"Now, he stands at the undisputed top of the new disciples, recently even having attained first place in the clan's youth competition."

The large man stopped his citation and gave a simple laugh, "However, when compared to Young Master, he doesn't even qualify to compete."

Yan Zhaoge, however, twitched his lips. His actual thoughts were along the lines of, "It'd be a miracle if that were actually true."

It could not be helped. No matter how he looked at it, that thing seemed to be a template main character.

Herein lay the problem. What was his role in main character Ye's abrupt rise to power?

"Let me think. The current number one genius figure of the younger generation in the same clan. Rich young master. Possesses considerable personal strength. Possesses a father that can abuse his authority for my sake. Possesses a significant and influential background. And most importantly, it seems 'I' stole his girl? My body's original owner seems to have even deflowered that girl surnamed Lin?"

“... yeah, the exterior of this flesh bag of mine also quite excellent, very handsome if I have to say so myself. This body is just perfect for a poser who wants to pull off the false prince act. Hitting or stepping on a face like this would probably create a considerable amount of warm, happy feelings inside.”

“And after that, my father would try to help me out, becoming another stepping stone just like me. This would create the road that a main character would need for his abrupt rise to power. One guy delivers his face to be smashed into the dirt and his whole family follows soon after, free shipping included...”

Yan Zhaoge rolled his eyes.

This script is definitely flawed!

HSSB 2: Dragon Against Dragon, A Stand-Off Between Kings; Which Is The True Dragon?

Various voices could be heard as Yan Zhaoge walked along the road.

“I pay my respects to senior apprentice-brother Yan.”

“Greetings, senior apprentice-brother Yan.”

These were the voices of various male disciples as they paid their respects while passing by.

“Junior apprentice-nephew Yan’s martial cultivation has advanced again. Wonderful! As expected from a leading figure of the younger generation, a genius among geniuses.”

“Elder Yan has a qualified successor. Truly, a tiger father will not have a useless dog of a son!”

These were the voices of various martial practitioners as they continuously sung his praise.

“Senior apprentice-brother Yan’s aura is becoming more imposing and powerful by the day, and yet he somehow looks gentle without a doubt...”

“Oiya, I feel the same way too. So it’s not just me huh?”

“But... but... the more he’s like this, the more I...”

“Right? Right?”

“He he, right what right? Shameless little girl.”

“Senior apprentice-sister! You... you... aren’t you the same!”

Okay. And those were the sounds of various female disciples experiencing their first awakening of love.

Yan Zhaoge flashed a brilliant smile at those female disciples, at the same time continuously repeating to himself within his mind, “Stay reserved. Keep cool.”

The burly man beside him released an extremely hearty laugh, “Young Master...”

Yan Zhaoge who was already used to his usual antics looked at him sideways, “Is there something else?”

The large man was his devoted personal attendant whose loyalty was beyond a doubt and was tasked to follow him everywhere.

Logically, as someone who crossed over, Yan Zhaoge should avoid the close associates of the body's original owner in order to avoid being exposed.

However, that kind of action was originally a double-edged sword. Conversely, staying close to those associates would assist him in blending into the present world more quickly.

Fortunately, Yan Zhaoge received more than just a body from its previous owner. He also received that person's memories.

Otherwise, even speaking the local language itself would be an insurmountable challenge.

“Young Master, I have already investigated that Ye Jing person. Even though he is suddenly showing massive improvement, he's still not someone worth noting. But, the grudge he has against you; why don't we...”

Yan Zhaoge could not resist quickly rolling his eyes. His speed ensured nobody noticed his odd behavior. “Yeah, without a doubt, it's this pattern as expected.”

The attendant and entourage would act first to incite conflict. Once the underlings were defeated, the malicious young master would act personally because he felt his pride had been stung. The young master would be beaten till not even his mother would recognize his face, which would first incite his father's and next his entire family's involvement. In the end, the entire group would be annihilated.

Sounds like a perfectly plotted out script, right?

“Perfect my ass!” Forced to become villainous cannon fodder, Yan Zhaoge simply could not feel a single speck of positive emotion towards the role he had been assigned.

He had apparently gone from free and leisurely second generation genius who never even needed to work hard to a background cannon fodder who was destined to serve as a stepping stone on the ordained son of Heaven’s road to the top.

The thoughts appearing in Yan Zhaoge’s mind at this time were rather silly and nonsensical.

Even the more fortunate enemies of the ordained son of heaven would seldom receive a good end. They would act as the rival figure, the type that was as resilient and undying as a cockroach. They never died after each defeat; the next time they showed up, their strength would have improved. In reality, these rival figures were simply reusable products that helped the main character gather experience and equipment.

As for those less fortunate enemies, it’s doubtful whether they could survive even a couple of chapters before dying or worse.

And in normal cases, someone like Yan Zhaoge who had the right background to summon forth an even mightier father was simply the mini-boss who came before the big boss. Mini-bosses were not likely to live for more than a handful of chapters before going

down the route of cannon fodder.

Also, the idea of he who strikes first gaining the upper hand did not apply. In accordance to the rules that governed these ordained sons of Heaven, any main character who suffered such a fate would simply be suppressed for a while before rising up once more with even greater momentum than before. That was often equivalent to gifting them a fortitious encounter, allowing them to grow stronger at an even faster rate.

In the end, those main characters would emerge unscathed, instead having grown stronger at an unthinkable rate. At this point, they would then hurry back and aim for the villainous young master's face.

The Main Character halo was just that tyrannical and unreasonable. If it wanted to flatten the cannon fodder, the cannon fodder would just be flattened. The flattening could even be done in a hundred and eighty unique and original ways.

“As for this main character Ye, what will his magical plot device turn out to be? A super secret manual from before the Great Calamity? Or perhaps an unparalleled divine tool? Or even a portable wise old grandpa? Or maybe he's someone's reincarnation?”

Yan Zhaoge's smile was slightly unnatural. He gave a hand wave, “There is no need to be concerned about him.”

The big man scratched his head, “As you say, Young Master.”

“Even though there seems to be a problem with the script, I, your elder brother, also have a magical plot device.”

The Great Calamity had created a new era. This was because there were differences in the worlds of before and after the Great Calamity, the route of martial cultivation having more or less changed. Even the physiology of people’s bodies was not exactly the same. Thus, Yan Zhaoge needed to adjust the various secret martial manuals within his mind to suit the current era. Were it not for this point, his cultivation would currently be soaring at an even greater rate.

After his arrival, besides carefully adapting to the new world and his new identity, most of Yan Zhaoge’s efforts had been focused on corroborating the knowledge stored within his mind.

And now, his efforts had borne fruit. It was time to soar.

So far, Yan Zhaoge had only worked on knowledge applicable to the cultivation levels of his current self and his past self. He had only ever attained certain cultivation realms; it wasn’t possible to convert his knowledge into practical application broadly across the entire cultivation spectrum.

Food needed to be eaten one mouthful at a time and journeys needed to be taken one step at a time.

Regardless, as his cultivation progressively increased and theories were proven to correspond with reality, a broader world

had already appeared before Yan Zhaoge.

Not only did he possess expertise in the martial path, his knowledge in other fields such as artifact refinement and medicinal pill alchemy was also sufficient to create large waves in this era.

The investigation of the seed of Li Flame True Fire carried out by his subordinates just happened to be related to this.

If his experiment were successful, he would undoubtedly receive immense benefits.

Yan Zhaoge twitched his lips, “Dragon against dragon, a face-off between kings, let us see who the true dragon is. Perhaps this Ye Jing isn’t actually some main character propped up by destiny. Maybe I’m just being oversensitive and over imaginative. Let’s observe the situation a bit more first.”

Rather, Yan Zhaoge was more troubled by the tricky matter of how he should face the girl who had been ‘eaten’ by the former owner of his body.

To the current him, his first priority was to improve both his personal strength and his position within the sect.

As for beautiful women, he did not have time to waste on pursuing them, though he would also not reject those who openly came knocking on his doorstep.

The problem left behind by the original owner of his body was truly a pain in the ass.

Despite cursing and moaning on the surface, in truth, Yan Zhaoge did not actually take this problem to heart. He shook his head and appropriately dealt with the tasks at hand before leaving to recuperate at his own residence, where he sat in meditation and refined his aura-qi, waiting for the next day to arrive. Soon after, he left for the clan's Assignment Hall.

Yan Zhaoge's arrival immediately attracted everyone's interest. Their eyes all focused on him.

Yet Yan Zhaoge's expression remained natural. Taking a quick glance around, he saw an incomparably gorgeous young girl with a slender figure walking towards him.

This girl looked to be sixteen or seventeen years of age. Her features were already world class, even superior to that of the Lin girl. She seemed like a heavenly fairy, a creature which did not consume the food of mortals. Her only flaw lay in a pair of eyes that were a rare icy blue, which granted her entire person a cold and detached air.

This Sikong Qing was another outstanding latecomer from the younger generation. Although she was rather young, her fame had long since spread. Her martial talent was extraordinary, only inferior to Yan Zhaoge himself. She had been acclaimed as another Heaven's favoured child of Broad Creed Mountain, receiving the

attention of many Elders at an early age.

When Yan Zhaoge saw her, he once again had the urge to roll his eyes.

From what he knew, after having been discarded by the Lin girl, Ye Jing had somehow encountered Sikong Qing, and this was even before he had joined Broad Creed Mountain. Due to some type of fateful encounter, there was even a pretty good relationship between the two.

At the moment, their relationship remained at the level of pure friendship. But according to a certain script, she was a girl from a good background, her talent was good, her beauty was overflowing and she was a true ice lady without any feminine emotion, yet she happened to look favourably upon a seemingly average person.

Under the influence of Ye Jing's main character aura, in time, this beauty who exceeded Miss Lin in every category would very likely become the empress to Ye Jing's emperor.

And beside Sikong Qing, there happened to be a scrumpy youth who was currently staring at Yan Zhaoge with all his might.

This scrumpy youth was naturally Ye Jing.

Yan Zhaoge could distinctly detect flames that had been suppressed for a long time being emanated from Ye Jing's gaze, flames that seemed as though they could explode forth at any

moment.

HSSB 3: Performing A Great Play

Sikong Qing looked towards Yan Zhaoge, seemingly examining him closely.

They were headed towards the Dragon Sealing Abyss, an infamous danger zone. As the leader of this expedition, should Yan Zhaoge decide to make life difficult for Ye Jing, it would be difficult for Ye Jing to survive the trip.

The thoughts of the others were much simpler. Some were glad that someone as strong as senior apprentice-brother Yan was leading the training expedition. Others stared at Yan Zhaoge fervently because they wanted to befriend and curry favour with him.

The few in the know were looking at Ye Jing as if waiting to watch a good show.

Ye Jing's eyebrows drew together tightly; after joining the clan, he had already learnt of many things.

Not only did the slightly older youth before him possess a higher cultivation and strength, he also possessed profound backing within the clan.

Yan Zhaoge's father was an Elder who happened to be one of the highest authorities of Broad Creed Mountain. Even without accounting for martial strength, his position and authority within the clan was solidly within the top five. He was also a direct

disciple of the clan leader and the strongest contender to succeed the position of Clan Chief.

Ye Jing's fists gradually tightened. His eyes focused on Yan Zhaoge without hiding or showing weakness.

“Are these the so-called eyes full of unyielding flames?”

Yan Zhaoge did not know whether to laugh or cry at that. Now, he shifted his line of sight towards the doorway leading to the side chamber, “Greetings, Elder Cui.”

A white haired old man appeared in the doorway. Ye Jing and the other hurriedly bowed and paid their respects upon seeing him, “Disciple greets honoured Elder.”

This white haired Elder happened to be an Elder of the assignment hall just like the middle aged man who had made the request of Yan Zhaoge the day before.

To Ye Jing and the others, whether it was his cultivation or his position, he was also a powerful figure deserving of respect.

The old man regarded Yan Zhaoge with a smile on his face, “Junior apprentice-nephew Yan, you already arrived? Very good, very good.”

Yan Zhaoge replied, “Elder Cui, please tell us more regarding the matter of the Dragon Sealing Abyss to you.”

Allowing his gaze to fall upon Yan Zhaoge, Ye Jing, Sikong Qing and the others, Elder Cui smiled as he said, “Some abnormalities have surfaced in the Dragon Sealing Abyss. The local forces have already finished with the initial dealing of the matter. Your task this time is to help investigate the abnormal behavior of the Dragon Sealing Abyss by entering the Abyss itself.”

He paused for a bit before looking towards Yan Zhaoge, “In principle, this task only requires a simple report after verifying the situation. However, should your group encounter an unexpected situation that requires prompt decision making, this old man has faith in your abilities. Junior apprentice-nephew Yan, please act at your own discretion.”

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “Elder Cui overpraises me.”

Elder Cui laughed along, before his gaze shifted towards three people including Ye Jing, “You three should have each received an artifact as a reward from the youth competition. How far have you progressed in nourishing and understanding them?”

Ye Jing and the two others replied together in respectful tones, “Ever since we received the artifacts, us disciples have been continuously nourishing them even as we keep up with our training. We can already control them on a basic level.”

In this world, ordinary weapons and defensive equipment were called mortal tools. Above mortal tool grade, there existed demi-artifacts, artifacts, spirit artifacts, and finally Sacred Artifacts.

These provided a huge power boost to martial practitioners; it was like giving wings to a tiger.

High-tier weapons and protective gear had the power to pierce the heavens and sunder the earth.

Unfortunately, normal craftsmen could only create mortal tools. Any equipment above mortal tool grade required martial practitioners to create it themselves. In addition, in order to refine artifacts of certain rank, a proportional strength was needed in the form of a particular cultivation realm.

That aside, artifact refinement was not something just anyone could learn. Its methods were exceedingly difficult to comprehend. The materials required were also scarce. Overall, the current world had fewer artifacts than martial practitioners of the equivalent rank.

Nevertheless, Sacred Grounds like Broad Creed Mountain were still affluent enough to award their disciples with artifacts.

Ye Jing and the others had won the first three places of the youth competition for new disciples, and the artifacts they had been rewarded with were enough to fill their peers with envy.

Elder Cui nodded, “Artifacts are sentient. If you nourish them consistently without slacking off, they will let you demonstrate additional might when the time comes to face the enemy.”

Ye Jing and the two others promptly nodded. Even though the rewarded artifacts were only low-grade artifacts, to the current them, they were already world-changing supreme treasures.

Actually, as their current cultivation was only enough to control demi-artifacts, these low-grade artifacts could be considered extremely luxurious equipment for them.

There was only a limited amount of good equipment. If they were not part of Broad Creed Mountain, even simply owning a demi-artifact would already be heaven's grace.

There were countless people with a level of cultivation similar to Ye Jing and them in this world who could only depend on mortal tools.

Elder Cui looked towards Sikong Qing, Ye Jing, and the others, "These eight are all new disciples. They might have also to undertake this mission, but their experience is a bit lacking. You eight, remember to take extra care."

Sikong Qing calmly said, "This disciple complies."

The other seven hurriedly voiced their agreement as well.

Elder Cui examined the sixteen young disciples assigned to this expedition as he stroked his beard. His gaze suddenly fell upon Ye Jing almost as if in surprise, "Hmm? Your cultivation... you've already successfully established a qi ocean within your dantian?!"

You weren't at this stage earlier during the youth competition. In such a short time, you've actually improved yet again?"

Acting neither servile nor overbearing, Ye Jing replied with a smile, "The martial arts and resources provided by the clan are much superior to those of my family."

"You've only joined the clan for a short time. This is mainly a result of your outstanding talent," praised Elder Cui.

The young disciples who had joined the clan together with Ye Jing underwent a slow change in opinion at that moment, "Before, he was already number one in the youth competition, but in such a short time, he has advanced yet again. I used to think that I should be able to catch up at least a little, but who would have thought that the difference would only become bigger."

"Even though his background isn't as good as senior apprentice-brother Yan's, this...is also a true genius!"

Almost as if he suddenly realized something, Elder Cui continued to ask, "This old man just thought of something. If I remember correctly, you should barely have cultivated for three full years, correct?"

Ye Jing replied, "Yes, honoured Elder. In my youth, I struggled by myself to strengthen my body and build my foundation. I truly only came into contact with martial arts at the age of thirteen."

Elder Cui burst out with abnormally genial laughter, “Good! Very good!”

Yan Zhaoge stood on the other side observing this act, his lips twitched strangely.

“I just knew it wouldn’t be this simple. So it was waiting for me here.” Yan Zhaoge glanced at Elder Cui with a shadow of a smile.

Some of the other young disciples suddenly seemed to realize something as they secretly sneaked peeks at Yan Zhaoge.

Elder Cui looked between Yan Zhaoge and Ye Jing, stating with an appreciative sigh of admiration, “If I still remember correctly, junior apprentice-nephew Yan also barely trained for three full years before successfully establishing the qi ocean within his dantian. The heavens are assisting my Broad Creed Mountain. Another genius among geniuses has appeared!”

Everyone’s expressions gradually became restrained and ambiguous. Their gaze shifted back and forth between Yan Zhaoge and Ye Jing.

“We didn’t understand Ye Jing’s circumstances before, huh. In truth, he has only officially cultivated for not even three years!”

“This Ye Jing is actually someone comparable to senior apprentice-brother Yan. What shocking talent!”

“No, wait. Senior apprentice-brother Yan grew up in Board Creed Mountain under the personal instruction of Elder Yan. Regardless of whether it’s his cultivation environment, conditions, techniques, resources, or martial legacies, they are all superior to Ye Jing’s.”

“Looking at it that way, isn’t this Ye Jing even more... even more... my god, how is that possible?”

Ye Jing took a deep breath. He raised his eyes and calmly stared towards Yan Zhaoge with his back straighter than before, as if he were a javelin that would pierce the heavens.

Yan Zhaoge, however, did not look at him. His interest had gathered upon the still-smiling Elder Cui.

Other disciples of the younger generation might not know of this man’s intent; but how could Yan Zhaoge not know?

This old man was someone backed by his second apprentice-uncle, who was his father’s prime competitor for the position of Broad Creed Mountain’s next Clan Chief.

Yan Zhaoge’s eyes narrowed into slits for a moment, before he started laughing soundlessly.

HSSB 4: A Yan Zhaoge Who Does Not Follow The Script

The old and white haired Elder Cui maintained his kind and benign act, all smiles while looking towards Ye Jing. To a spectator, it was almost as though he did not realize the implication of his words.

Yan Zhaoge looked first at Elder Cui, then at Ye Jing. Suddenly, he found this entire situation laughable.

The ordained son of Heaven, when faced against an opponent the current him stood no chance against, would often receive the passive or active backing of certain forces. These forces would become his shield providing time and opportunities for him to grow, at least before he charged out of the beginner village.

‘The enemy of your enemy is your friend.’ These people were usually those who stood opposite to the villainous cannon fodder.

Once the ordained son of Heaven completed his growth, these forces could just sit comfortably back and watch as he started a massacre of epic proportions. As allies, they would naturally benefit a hundredfold in return.

Normally, these people would be known as... the righteous faction?

“He truly exudes the air of a well-rehearsed actor. This is a

perfect play out of the scripted scenario.”

Yan Zhaoge sized up Elder Cui and Ye Jing. He did not hide his action; nor was he polite about it.

Elder Cui did not miss this. However, rather than becoming angry, he was secretly delighted.

“As rumoured, those who are domineering and ostentatious will seek to avenge every slight,” the white bearded old man smiled without any indication of his true thoughts, “Having lost face in front of these people, even while there are only sixteen here, the news will soon spread quickly, from one to ten, ten to a hundred... Now that the thorn has been planted, the child won’t be able to take this slight lying down. Whether he explodes here or endures until the Sealing Dragon Abyss, both outcomes are acceptable.”

Yan Zhaoge watched Elder Cui, and then looked towards Ye Jing again. Deep inside, he was laughing derisively.

“First I express my disdain. Next Ye Jing expresses his unyielding spirit. Then I become angry because I lost face when he contradicted me. Finally I send my underlings in the form of servants or junior disciples to teach him a lesson, only for them to be beaten so badly that they are left searching for their teeth all over the floor. In this situation, I cannot personally move unless the opponent commits an obvious offense; even if I act openly, I can only exchange pointers or compare skills.”

So long as a challenge had not been issued by someone of a lower

cultivation, using your cultivation to suppress that person would earn a martial practitioner a reputation of bullying the weak.

And it just so happened that the ordained son of Heaven would also possess the main character aura, which would grant him the innate divine ability to surpass levels to slaughter his enemies and stand unrivalled against opponents at the same cultivation level.

Sending a single small fry would not work. Sending a mob was also ineffective for the most part. On the contrary, there was even a possibility of them turning into large amounts of experience points, thereby increasing Ye Jing's growth rate.

“Maybe, if he keeps fighting, he'll even level up on the spot?”

This was not an impossible thing.

“At that time, because my underlings have been beaten black and blue, I'll fly into a fit of rage. Without caring whether I'm bullying the weak, I'll try to teach this Ye Jing a lesson. Even though Ye Jing is currently much weaker than me, his unyielding staunchness will still allow him to withstand several exchanges as he shows off his brilliance.”

“Perhaps he'll even use his magical plot device to make me suffer a small defeat.”

“And when I finally get serious and decide to beat him half dead, this Elder Cui or whoever will pop up of nowhere and overturn the

situation. As for me, I would spout some cliché lines, ‘Kid, consider yourself lucky’ or something like that. And just like that, wouldn’t the performance come to an end?”

“Even if I win this fight, there’s no glory to be had. Most people would think I’m using my strength to bully the weak. Wouldn’t their sympathies go to Ye Jing instead?”

Yan Zhaoge twitched his lip, “This script... do you think I’m an idiot?”

Elder Cui beamed ever so innocently at Yan Zhaoge and Ye Jing. Sikong Qing looked at Yan Zhaoge guardedly. Everyone else stared at Yan Zhaoge with both apprehension and expectation, wondering how he would respond.

“The Sealing Dragon Abyss; only a few among you have gone there before. Even so, you should all know its fearsome reputation,” In the face of everyone’s expectations, Yan Zhaoge finally began speaking, “With your cultivation, even without entering its depth, merely nearing its outskirts will entail grave danger for you. Even though I will be travelling alongside you, the true purpose of this trip is for you to temper yourselves, and not to go around sightseeing. I will act as necessary, but you will also need to persevere and rely on yourself.”

Hearing Yan Zhaoge’s words, Elder Cui let out a slight smile. He thought to himself, “It seems Yan Zhaoge will wait until the Sealing Dragon Abyss before acting.”

Ye Jing and Sikong Qing both felt a chill within their hearts.

However, at this time, Yan Zhaoge suddenly changed his tune, “You and I will journey together. Thus I will naturally look after you. And as they say, to do a good job, you will need good tools...”

Yan Zhaoge snapped his fingers, “Ah Hu.”

A tall and sturdy figure appeared in the doorway, “Yes, Young Master?”

Yan Zhaoge said, “Bring me sixteen second-grade products. Yes, and mainly choose the defensive kind.”

“As you say, Young Master,” replied Ah Hu, the burly large attendant who was always at his side.

Not long after, Ah Hu returned from his task with his arms full of objects, which he then placed in front of everyone.

An entire field of magnificent light flashed and flickered so brightly that the young disciples were unable to open their eyes. Furthermore, strong waves of spiritual qi caused their blood and aura-qi to heave.

“Artifacts! They’re all artifacts!” each and every person expressed their shock, “Senior apprentice-brother Yan, these artifacts...”

Yan Zhaoge continued as if nothing happened, “These are from my personal collection and not from the clan. I have decided to grant them to you. There are a total of sixteen artifacts, one for each of you. Now, you may come forth and pick your own artifact in order of seniority.”

The entire hall was suddenly silent. A couple of vague noises sounded in the background as if someone was swallowing their saliva.

To these new disciples with their lowly cultivation, these artifacts were rare treasures. Ye Jing and the other two were only granted artifacts after having withstood heavy competition in the clan’s youth competition and taken the top three spots. And even so, they only received a single artifact each.

How much effort had they spent? How much of a glorious feat had they had to perform, to be bestowed with an artifact at that time?

But now, everyone was suddenly given an artifact each just like that.

Even though Ye Jing and the other two already possessed artifacts, how could anyone reject another one of those precious treasures?

It was just that Yan Zhaoge had just taken out these sixteen whole artifacts without blinking an eyelid, as if these were not the artifacts that the younger generation yearned for even in their

dreams but rather a pile of scrap metal.

Moreover, Yan Zhaoge had not used his identity to obtain these from the clan's reserves. Instead, this was his personal property.

Everyone's attitude towards Yan Zhaoge suddenly changed from before, as they regarded him with increasingly greater enthusiasm.

Ye Jing tightened his fists instead. The anger in his eyes could not be hidden.

He felt that Yan Zhaoge had humiliated him, having done so by purposefully flaunting his wealth and status.

Sikong Qing looked towards Yan Zhaoge and slightly shook her head in displeasure.

Elder Cui was initially surprised, but soon after, started laughing inwardly, "What is this supposed to be? Using wealth to make friends; bribing others to isolate Ye Jing while showing off his wealth at the same time?"

"Admittedly, this is an excellent hand. The results aren't bad either. He managed to regain the face lost earlier. However, this course of action is... is... ha ha, truly the actions of a hedonistic silkpants..."

"This child is not someone to fear. In the future, he will definitely cause trouble for his father."

Elder Cui smiled while shaking his head. He picked up and examined a set of armor, before speaking to Ye Jing and the others, “The Sealing Dragon Abyss is indeed dangerous. This is also a kindness from your senior apprentice-brother Yan.”

Facing everyone’s expectant looks, Yan Zhaoge continued to speak steadily without any change in demeanour as if he didn’t notice their reactions, “These things are my gifts to you; thus, I will not ask for them back. They are yours now. However, I request that you report the performance of these artifacts back to me. Whether you are nourishing them or wielding them, please keep proper records of their performance. That way, I can separate the wheat from the chaff and make proper adjustments when I refine the next batch of artifacts.”

The disciples all agreed to Yan Zhaoge’s request simultaneously. Then, they all seemed to have suddenly realised something as they turned to focus their attention on Yan Zhaoge. Their expressions were unnatural, as though they had just seen a ghost.

Elder Cui trembled involuntarily. The artifact within his hand nearly fell out of his loosened grip. “What did you just say?”

HSSB 5: The Two Are Not On The Same Level

As if he had not at all noticed his audience's dumbstruck expressions, Yan Zhaoge continued to speak nonchalantly, "Most of these artifacts are defensive in nature rather than being weapons because your safety is the main concern. However, you must not develop an overreliance on them. Negligence will not allow you to improve. When training, tempering yourself is key."

"Wai... wait ... it's not that, junior apprentice-nephew Yan," Elder Cui was a bit tongue tied and required a long moment to regain control, "A moment ago, did you say 'refine the next batch of artifacts'?"

He stared at the pile of artifacts in front of him in disbelief, "You mean to say that these are personally forged by you and not from your personal collection accumulated elsewhere?"

Yan Zhaoge shrugged his shoulders, "Of course I personally refined these. There's no way I would have the interest or the patience to gather so many low-grade artifacts for my collection."

These words made everyone present subconsciously swallow their saliva, but no one could find anything to refute them.

While low-grade artifacts might be precious treasures to lowly cultivators like themselves, to someone of Yan Zhaoge's background, it was understandable that they might not count for much.

Everyone's expressions had shifted into ambiguity as if the world they lived in had suddenly turned surreal.

The situation before them completely defied their previous knowledge and common sense.

That Yan Zhaoge's realm of power was sufficient to forge artifacts was something no one could deny.

While no one had ever heard of Yan Zhaoge's accomplishment in artifact forging, it was not something impossible.

However, the act of forging an artifact was not something simple. The task required a large amount of time and effort.

Even those martial practitioners who devoted themselves to artifact forging; how many would treat themselves like blacksmiths and mass-produce artifacts?

Elder Cui inhaled sharply, "You... how much time did you spend forging these artifacts?"

"I usually work on these during the free time I have between my usual practice sessions. These sixteen artifacts took me, oh, a bit less than a month." Yan Zhaoge downplayed his response in a casual manner.

"Impossible!" Elder Cui stubbornly said, "If you said Elder Yan had this ability, this old man would believe it. But junior

apprentice-nephew Yan, you...”

He shook his head, apparently unwilling to believe what Yan Zhaoge said.

In truth, Yan Zhaoge’s father and those of a similarly strong cultivation could effortlessly forge these artifacts.

However, who would act so senselessly? If they had the time and effort to refine these, they might as well set their goals higher and put their effort into refining spirit artifacts.

The others were starting to doubt Yan Zhaoge. Their eyes harboured suspicion. Perhaps having been forced into a corner, this senior apprentice-brother Yan had decided to feign abilities more impressive than he actually possessed?

Yan Zhaoge broke out in laughter, “Of course it’s impossible using the external crystal furnace. However, it is very much possible with the Internal Crystal Furnace.”

Hearing this response left most of those present at a loss, but there was one particular person who had once again been struck dumb.

Elder Cui’s voice had become a stuttering mess once more, “You... you... did you just say Internal Crystal Furnace? It shouldn’t... it can’t be... the legendary pre-Calamity...”

“But the Internal Crystal Furnace has long since disappeared! The materials, the method of creation, and even just the most basic records of its internal structure have been completely lost without even a single fragment of it having been passed down! All that’s left in the entire Eight Extremities World are simple stories and rumours of its existence.”

In the legends, the martial practitioner civilization was at its peak before the Great Calamity. Not just the cultivation techniques and martial skills, but also the artifact forging level of that time, was similarly advanced.

In that era, martial practitioners did not even touch mortal tools. Demi-artifacts, artifacts, spirit artifacts and even Sacred Artifacts were not scarce at that time.

But then arrived the Great Calamity whereupon everything disappeared. Not many things including artifacts and knowledge could survive such wide spread destruction, and only legends were left behind for those that came after to revere.

However, all of it was not a secret to Yan Zhaoge. The Divine Palace martial repository from before the Great Cataclysm had held more than just secrets of the martial dao.

“As luck would have it, I discovered some ruins when I was undergoing training to reach the outer aura stage, and these ruins just happened to contain an incomplete record of Internal Crystal Furnace construction,” Yan Zhaoge smiled, “Therefore, I set out to experimentally recreate and perfect the Internal Crystal Furnace, allowing it to once more appear within the Eight Extremities

World. These low-grade artifacts are by-products of these experiments. I made them myself. Currently, only low-grade artifacts can be forged. These are already the best among the second-grade products. There are also some first grade products that are close to mid-grade artifacts, but those aren't quite there yet, plus their stability remains an issue. Thus, I have decided to nourish them myself to gather more information in preparation for the next batch of artifacts I forge.”

Yan Zhaoge snapped his fingers, “As the process is continuously perfected, creating mid-grade artifacts and even high-grade artifacts will become possible. If we can figure out the ancient method of Internal Crystal Furnace reinforcement, spirit artifacts might then also be in the cards.”

At that moment, Ah Hu returned with a sturdy furnace that was as tall as a person and overflowing with aura-qi. Knowing his young master's intentions, he had left earlier to quickly pick up the furnace.

Elder Cui had never seen an Internal Crystal Furnace before, but he at least knew the artifact-forging furnace in front of him was definitely not an external Crystal Furnace.

The other people present slowly returned to their senses at this time, but their astonishment was still very much evident.

Even the usually calm and collected Sikong Qing was astonished.

Because she was more knowledgeable than the others, she

understood the importance of this furnace in front of her.

At the moment, it only represented a possibility or a mere seedling. But once it had finally grown, would it not be a tall tree that could touch the heavens?

“This time, I was heading towards the Sealing Dragon Abyss for more than just the clan’s mission. This is also my personal business. For the sake of further perfecting this Internal Crystal Furnace, I require the special environmental conditions of the Sealing Dragon Abyss and also a seed of ‘Li Flame True Fire’, which also happens to have appeared in the Sealing Dragon Abyss.”

Yan Zhaoge’s calm manner of speech caused Ye Jing and Sikong Qing to look at each other in dismay.

Someone excitedly called out, “Senior apprentice-brother Yan, if mid-grade and high-grade artifacts and possibly even spirit artifacts... even... even...”

In the current world, Sacred Artifacts were incredibly rare, thus that person did not dare continue thinking along that path. Nevertheless, he was exceptionally moved, “If our clan can forge large amounts of spirit artifacts, then wouldn’t... wouldn’t...”

Yan Zhaoge nodded and smiled widely showing the whites of his teeth, “Exactly. If we are successful, then in the future, when you go outside for tempering and meet up with members of the other Sacred Grounds, you will wield artifacts when they wield demi-artifacts, and spirit artifacts when they wield artifacts. We will be

able to crush them to death under endless piles of superior equipment.”

All the disciples simultaneously let out a cheer.

Yan Zhaoge waved his hands silencing his audience, “Work hard in your cultivation. All of you represent the future of our Broad Creed Mountain.”

The entire group responded harmoniously, “We act with modesty and prudence. We train with all our hearts. Glory to the Broad Creed name!”

In truth, Yan Zhaoge had achieved his fame while still being young. His true age was not much greater than that of Ye Jing, Sikong Qing and those others in front of him. Calling these disciples the future of Broad Creed Mountain was therefore a bit incongruous, as though they were not members of the same generation.

However, to the people present, except for a single exception, no one found it strange.

The comparison between Yan Zhaoge and Ye Jing had long since been forgotten.

They were not on the same level at all. The issues they considered and the way they thought; whether it was their perspective or their insight, there existed a huge gap.

Without considering anything else, Yan Zhaoge's contribution in the form of the Internal Crystal Furnace would very likely affect Broad Creed Mountain's power and standing on the world stage. This kind of achievement was in no way something a mere Martial Scholar could compare to.

Moreover, Yan Zhaoge himself was also a monstrous genius.

When they were still striving to stand out among their peers, Yan Zhaoge had already long since set his sights on improving the entire clan.

Elder Cui finally managed to recover his smiling expression, "Junior apprentice-nephew Yan truly lives up to his reputation as a pillar of Broad Creed Mountain, a Heaven's chosen son of our younger generation. However, this news should quickly be reported to the clan and..."

Yan Zhaoge interrupted him before he could finish, "This is no need for you to inconvenience yourself. I reported this matter yesterday, and Grand Master and my father already know about it. In fact, father has already taken over my Internal Crystal Furnace research. The furnace you see in front of you is just an extra copy I kept around to blindly tinker with as a personal hobby."

Elder Cui's white beard twitched, but his smile was forcefully maintained as he said, "This is wonderful news! However, it should be kept a secret. If this news is leaked to the other Sacred Grounds, there is no guarantee that it would not bring harm to our

Broad Creed Mountain. Junior apprentice-nephew Yan's actions were lacking in caution..."

Yan Zhaoge chuckled softly, "The official notice will soon be released. With Elder Cui's position, you will probably be informed tomorrow. As for why Grand Master made this decision, it is not my place to know. Elder Cui, it is best if you don't second guess him."

Elder Cui's face slightly stiffened. He watched as Yan Zhaoge unexpectedly walked over to stand in front of him.

Yan Zhaoge's smile at this time became progressively colder, "Assignment Hall Elder? Ha! Such a high post. Such a high position. To these disciples of the younger generation, your role in today's matter can be easily overlooked. In the future, you can continue your benevolent and kind old man act. However, did you really think that by causing me to lose face, I would only bear a grudge towards junior apprentice-brother Ye, while not harboring any thoughts towards you?"

HSSB 6: Indifferent To Life And Death, We Can Fight If You Are Not Convinced

Elder Cui quickly recovered his kindly manner and laughed while shaking his head, “This old man was simply praising a disciple of the younger generation. How can that be wrong?”

He gave Yan Zhaoge a look-over, “However, even though you have a considerable background, you should remember your standing as a member of the junior generation. Just based on your rampant speech just now, this old man can discern that you have no respect for your seniors. Even Elder Yan will not be able to deny your crime of rampant rebelliousness and lack of virtue. Young man, regardless of whether this Internal Crystal Furnace is real or fake, whether or not you are the one who discovered it, regardless of your contributions, you must speak cautiously and proceed prudently. Act with more modesty; that is the proper path.”

Even though Elder Cui maintained a kindly smile, his atmosphere had already become imposingly cold. All the younger disciples present were fearful to the extent of not daring to breath loudly. They could only watch Elder Cui while trembling in fear.

The entire situation had already developed beyond their wildest imagination.

In contrast, Yan Zhao put forth a smile that was much more peaceful and auspicious in comparison, “You, my senior? The clan does indeed place weight on seniority and ranking. I am also someone who venerates the elderly and respects the worthy.”

“It’s just that, even without my father, it is a simple matter for me to not treat certain people as my senior if I so desire.”

“Indeed, I cannot find any fault with your part in today’s matter. However, with regard to past matters, I’m sure you understand. Before today, have you kept your ass clean?”

“I venerate the elderly and respect the worthy on the premise that other person is worthy of respect regardless of age.”

Elder Cui glared fiercely at Yan Zhaoge, “You...”

Yan Zhaoge gave him a sideways look, “I what?”

Elder Cui was rendered speechless. It was only at this point that he understood that the youth in front of him was even more domineering than he expected. Unfortunately, the youth happened to be even pettier than expected as well.

At this moment, he even wanted to fall out with Yan Zhaoge and give him a lesson to remember, just that he realised he didn’t have any way of creating difficulty for him.

He wanted to attack directly, but Ah Hu stood by the side smiling malevolently at him, exposing a set of white teeth. His body stiffened immediately on instinct. He could not retreat, nor could he advance.

Yan Zhaoge spoke tranquilly, “Did you believe you could use a foolish child as a tool? In truth, you yourself are nothing more than a spear in someone’s hand.

“If you had successful entrapped me, the ones standing behind you would protect you at any cost, [because they want to buy horse bones with a thousand taels of gold](#). Now that you have failed, once my backing moves against you, do you think your backing will still protect you? How much effort do you think they’ll put into protecting you?”

This means to demonstrate one’s attractiveness to talented people in order to get capable followers... basically it comes from a story in a story. The story in a story has a king who is trying to buy a fast horse. He fails at first until some guy brought the bones of a fast horse. The king buys it anyways and suddenly everyone thinks if the king is willing to pay so much for just the bones, then how about a live horse? The king quickly gets his horse. As for the story, King Zhao of the state of Yan has an adviser named Guo Wei. His adviser tells him the horse story and gets him to build a gold terrace for him. Then King Zhao attracted many brilliant minds and the state of Zhao became more prosperous for a time before the king died and the next generation did stupid things. And no, this Zhao isn’t the same Zhao in Yan Zhaoge’s name because it would be stupid to name your prince using the same character as you enemy’s name.

Having said his piece, Yan Zhaoge turned around, completely ignoring the old man, Elder Cui. He glanced at Ye Jing, Sikong Qing and them, before proceeding to leave the Assignment Hall. “Bring your artifacts along; we’re setting off. Our destination is the Sealing Dragon Abyss.”

Ah Hu carried the Internal Crystal Furnace and followed closely behind. He sent a voice transmission, “Young Master, is this killing a chicken to warn the monkeys? It’s just this time, the chicken is a little big and your monkeys are a little small.”

“You don’t understand,” Yan Zhaoge shook his head, turning to look at Ye Jing who had followed him out. The boy was no longer that angry. Instead he looked pensive.

Yan Zhaoge’s mood was peaceful. Even though he had to bear the mistakes of this body’s current owner, the current him still had no grievance with Ye Jing. As such, he would not take the initiative to suppress him.

If the wide road was broad enough for both of them to walk on simultaneously, living in harmony would still be best.

“However, if you decide to oppose me, I will not avoid confrontation either. We can properly pit our strengths against each other and see just who is superior: you, the native ordained son of Heaven, or me, the transmigrant who crossed over. I look easy upon life and death; if you remain unconvinced, we can just fight. I won’t care who you are or what you want.”

Ye Jing gazed towards Yan Zhaoge’s back with his eyes brimming with complicated feelings.

Sikong Qing watched Yan Zhaoge. Her eyes were clear and cold as always, but they now held an additional bit of curiosity.

Everyone else looked at Yan Zhaoge, completely convinced of his ability.

If the Internal Crystal Furnace had allowed them to touch upon Yan Zhaoge's ability, his direct confrontation with Elder Cui allowed them to understand the true meaning of being domineering.

Elder Cui was a higher-up that would normally cause the younger disciples to be afraid of breathing too loudly. Yet, Yan Zhaoge actually dared to face this person directly; moreover, he had achieved the upper hand with every step, completely dominating the exchange.

Compared to the artifacts from before, the issue with Elder Cui allowed them to truly understand that they could not be considered to be on the same level as Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge no longer paid attention to the younger disciples. He forged ahead at his own pace, while Ah Hu followed him closely. Now, Yan Zhaoge looked over at him out of the corner of his eyes.

Ah Hu made a face and let out a silly laughter. Using his inner qi to control sound, he secretly sent Yan Zhaoge a sound transmission, "Young Master, this time, it was my slip up. I really didn't think that Ye Jing would improve a whole stage in such a short time and successfully establish the qi ocean within his dantian."

Yan Zhaoge rolled his eyes. This matter, was not a bit outside of

his expectations.

The ordained son of Heaven and his Main Character aura; well, it just loved to amaze the world with a single act, bringing enlightenment to the dog eyes of those who underestimated him and beating black and blue the dog faces of who that stood against him.

This type of thing, Yan Zhaoge also enjoyed. Obviously on the premise that he himself was the one doing the beating and not the one whose face was being beaten.

“Instruct my subordinates to investigate and report back quickly,” Yan Zhaoge also sent back a sound transmission, “That old man Cui tried to provoke a grudge between me and Ye Jing. It shouldn’t be just that simple.”

“Even in the worse case scenario, even if I truly moved to kill Ye Jing and left behind evidence directly indicating my guilt before being convicted of acting against clan members, so long as my father still lives, I would still be able to make a comeback.

“Moreover, if I truly decided to act, it wouldn’t be that easy to catch my trail.”

“This would not really help in the competition between second apprentice-uncle and my father, so there must be another reason. Investigate this Ye Jing’s interpersonal relationships. Investigate it carefully, especially his relationships within the clan.”

Ah Hu's expression had become serious without its usual ingratiating smile, "As you command, Young Master."

Yan Zhaoge nodded and continued forwards. After walking a while, he suddenly stopped, "Tsk, I almost forgot the main issue. Ah Hu, I need you to make a return trip to the Assignment Hall."

Ah Hu rubbed his fists and wiped his palms, "If young master feels that he has not vented enough, allow me to act. I will return immediately and beat that rotten old man into the ground."

Yan Zhaoge waved his hands, "It's not that. It's just that I forgot to pick up the details of the clan's mission regarding the investigating of abnormalities within the Sealing Dragon Abyss. You go back and pick it up."

Ah Hu, "..."

At a later time, Elder Cui Xin of the assignment hall was relieved of his post due to his accepting of bribes and suppressing of junior disciples. He was further subject to the interrogation of the punishment hall.

— — — — —

In a certain darkness-filled secret chamber within Broad Creed Mountain.

"The rumor was true. The Internal Crystal Furnace possesses

such a miraculous ability.”

“Quickly spread this news.

“The current Internal Crystal Furnace is still imperfect. It can only forge low-grade artifacts. Its value, while significant, is still limited. Shouldn’t we wait until there’s more progress before acting? We can avoid exposing ourselves and provoking the attention of Broad Creed Mountain that way.”

“We will remain hidden. However, this is important news that needs to be reported immediately. As for any follow-up actions, we’ll just wait for instructions from the other side.”

“Okay.”

—————

In another place.

“The Internal Crystal Furnace research has already been transferred to the higher-ups of the clan. However, the foundation was built up by that child, Yan Zhaoge.”

“If we had the foundation, we could also attempt to derive the rest.”

“This time, he is leaving for the Sealing Dragon Abyss. He does

have bodyguards, but their strength is limited. It will be a good chance for us to send people to block and kill him.”

“Contact the remnants of the Crimson Spirit Flags. The Crimson Spirit Flags was destroyed in the hands of Yan Zhaoge’s father. The father’s debt can be paid by the son. If they move, it will not cause any suspicion. However, ensure that Yan Zhaoge does not actually die, at least not before we obtain everything associated with the Internal Crystal Furnace. We can hand him over to them afterwards.”

“As for news regarding the Internal Crystal Furnace, don’t let the people of the Crimson Spirit Flags know about it for now; just let them capture the target.”

— — — — —

A large rift valley within Eastern Tang Kingdom, one of the Heaven Domain’s five Regions. The East Heaven Region; this was the goal of Yan Zhaoge’s expedition, Sealing Dragon Abyss.

“Junior apprentice-brother Ye, weren’t you born in the Eastern Tang Kingdom?” a young disciple asked Ye Jing while the group was en-route.

Ye Jing nodded, feeling deeply moved, “Yes, I was.”

In the current era, the strongest clans, also known as Sacred Grounds, ruled the entire world. Each had their own impenetrable

ancestral headquarters and large amounts of land under their direct governance. With this land as the centre, their influence expanded to the surrounding areas and thus the entire territory.

For example, Broad Creed Mountain itself directly controlled the heart of the five Regions, the Central Heaven Region, from which its influence to the entire Heaven Territory was spread.

Other than the Central Heaven Region, the other four Regions were occupied by various clans, dynasties and familial powers, each of which was influenced by Broad Creed Mountain. These smaller powers operated on their own, but each acknowledged Broad Creed Mountain as their supreme ruler.

The Eastern Tang Kingdom was one of East Heaven Region's three largest powers. It also constituted the easternmost edge of Broad Creed Mountain's territory.

In places like Eastern Tang Kingdom, there would be other smaller powers in the form of clans and familial powers.

Looking at the capital of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Ye Jing's thoughts drifted. He had been born in the Ye Family, which was only a small family from a small city within the Eastern Tang Kingdom. Through his efforts, the Ye Family was already the strongest power within that city. However, within the entire Eastern Tang Kingdom, it was still insignificant.

Having left the small city of his birth and gone to the Eastern Tang Kingdom capital, he had truly had an eye-opening

experience.

As for after he left the Eastern Tang Kingdom and became a disciple of Broad Creed Mountain, that had been even more of an eye-opening experience for him; he was like a frog which had jumped out of its well and finally been able to see the true boundlessness of the skies.

While he still needed to look up to many of the Eastern Tang Kingdom's stronger martial practitioners, his return to Eastern Tang this time could still be considered a triumphant return of the youth who left home.

“After entering the city, I will pay a visit to the King. I will also have to visit our clan's Principal Elder who oversees the Eastern Tang Kingdom to retrieve intelligence on the Sealing Dragon Abyss's condition in advance.”

Yan Zhaoge, who was walking at the very front of the group, now stopped his footsteps, as his gaze also fell on the Eastern Tang capital.

To everyone present, he said, “Go find a place to rest temporarily. You may do as you wish for the time being. However, we will gather in half an hour before heading out to the Sealing Dragon Abyss. Understood?”

The young disciples replied as a collective whole, “Yes, senior apprentice-brother Yan.”

Ye Jing's face was expressionless.

HSSB 7: Ye Jing's Thoughts

The speaker was speaking without any ulterior motives, yet the listener somehow detected a hidden motive.

Yan Zhaoge had but spoken casually, but Ye Jing, who had just returned to his home town in glory, no longer held the complicated feeling from before.

Everyone else was in a good mood. Despite being overshadowed by Yan Zhaoge, having left Broad Creed Mountain and arrived in the Eastern Tang Kingdom of the East Heaven Region, they suddenly remembered that they too could also be considered gifted geniuses.

As disciples of one of the Sacred Grounds, Broad Creed Mountain, they had originally been tested and chosen from amongst the very best of those from large powers like the Eastern Tang Kingdom. With that, how could any one of them be weak?

It was just that every time one of them started feeling the slightest bit conceited, a single glance forward to that leisurely proceeding blue-robed back would immediately eliminate their fickle thoughts.

When their hands came into contact with their artifacts, thoughts of trying harder and striving higher would occupy their mind.

In the Eastern Tang Kingdom, of those with a cultivation

comparable to theirs, only the very best elites of the Royal Palace Defense Army could possess not even artifacts, but just demi-artifacts...

Of course, they could not be compared to Yan Zhaoge at all.

Even the people they interacted with were on a completely different level.

The person Yan Zhaoge would visit first was the King of Eastern Tang Kingdom who needed no introduction. A powerful and influential figure within the area, he was the Eastern Tang Kingdom's number one martial practitioner, the ruler of one of the East Heaven Region's, under Broad Creed Mountain, three great powers, the Eastern Tang Kingdom.

And the Eastern Tang Kingdom's Principal Elder was Broad Creed Mountain's representative in the Eastern Tang Kingdom. An extremely important figure within the kingdom, his position was even higher than that of the Elder Cui who had forced Yan Zhaoge into an awkward position at the sect.

Even though there was a difference between internal and external positions, cultivation levels, and degree of authority, under clan regulations, elders of the Assignment Hall like Elder Cui served to oversee important cities or rich lands or the extraction and use of important resources when they were placed in a position outside of the clan in places like the Eastern Tang Kingdom. Known as Acting Elders, their duty was to protect the clan's interests.

On the other hand, Principal Elders served to oversee dynasties as well as large clans or familial powers. They watched over those forces and served to ensure Broad Creed Mountain's influence and income in those places. As Principal Elders, they were also responsible for dealing with any unexpected situations that might arise.

After entering the city and choosing a meeting point, Yan Zhaoge left for the palace alone. Ye Jing and the others separated and acted on their own in the capital.

Ye Jing did not have any interest in revisiting his old haunts. He walked along the river that flowed through the city until he reached a bridge. Stepping onto the bridge, he stood by himself as he looked down at the fast flowing water, calmly and wordlessly.

Sikong Qing appeared soundlessly behind him. Ye Jing detected her arrival, saying unconcernedly, "Senior apprentice-sister."

"Are you thinking about just now?" asked Sikong Qing as she slightly tilted her head.

Ye Jing shook his head, "At the time, I felt that he was purposefully showing off, but after giving it some thought, it seemed unlikely."

Sikong Qing said, "Then you are thinking about the artifacts senior apprentice-brother Yan granted to everyone?"

Back at the clan, of the sixteen people in the expedition, only Ye Jing had not chosen one of Yan Zhaoge's artifacts. The other fifteen people, Sikong Qing included, had each chosen an artifact.

"Senior apprentice-brother Yan might be showing off, but he does have the qualification," said Sikong Qing as she moved to stand by Ye Jing's side, "Low-grade artifacts are inanimate constructs; they cannot take sides. Our future achievements will not be decided upon by a single low-grade artifact. Senior apprentice-brother Yan treated everyone equally and gave an artifact to each person. Thus, I saw no reason to decline his artifact. He will not miss it because in the future, he will have even better things."

Ye Jing nodded. Even though Sikong Qing had picked out an artifact just like everyone else, she had not placed much weight on this act due to her confidence in her future achievements.

"You choosing not to accept an artifact may have shown your determination to walk your own path," said Sikong Qing, "But it could also have been interpreted as you having refused senior apprentice-brother Yan's kindness; the fact that you refused showing that you are unable to differentiate good from bad. However, I feel like senior apprentice-brother Yan was not specifically expressing any intentions towards you. There is not much difference between the way he looks at us and the way he looks at you."

Her words unexpectedly caused Ye Jing to tighten his fists. That figure from yesteryear who had taken away his childhood

sweetheart and completely ignored him seemed to once again appear before his eyes.

“I don’t know what he thinks, but I will not accept anything from him,” Ye Jing said. His words gradually grew more tranquil as his eyes were filled with a vigor stemming from confidence, “To the current me, while a low-grade artifact is indeed something very good, ultimately, working on my cultivation is still the most important.”

Sikong Qing said, “That is also true. So long as your mind is clear and your heart unclouded, your cultivation will be more successful. A clouded heart will cause your cultivation to easily suffer. It is worthwhile to simply let yourself go and act purely guided by your feelings.”

Ye Jing clenched his fist and said, “That Yan Zhaoge is currently stronger than me is a fact. Not only is his cultivation higher than mine, there’s also his forging of artifacts with the Internal Crystal Furnace. Still I will not always lose to him. I will definitely surpass him.”

“A mere Martial Scholar is not much. I will compete with him. Who can become a Martial Grandmaster first? And after that, who can transcend the impure and ascend into the realm of Martial Saint first!”

In this world, martial cultivation was divided into realms. Starting with the Body Refinement realm, there were three major stages, first the body-tempering stage, next the meridian-connecting stage, then finally the qi-directing stage. Each of these

stages was divided into three phases; early, mid and late.

So far, there were nine levels in total, and after those levels was the tenth level, which was also the final, peak stage of the Body Refinement realm. Thus, there were 10 levels in the Body Refinement Realm.

Above the peak stage existed a large bottleneck. If a Martial Artist was able to break through, they would have successfully stepped into the realm of a Martial Scholar.

While it might not be apparent in Sacred Grounds like Broad Creed Mountain, in reality, someone who could become a Martial Scholar already had the qualifications to establish their own minor clan.

The leaders of many tiny forces also happened to be in the Martial Scholar realm.

The Martial Scholar realm was divided into three major stages. They were-the inner aura stage, the outer aura stage, and finally the Xiantian level. Each major stage was divided into three phases: early, mid and late. In addition, there was a final stage at the end, the Heavenly Connection stage. The Martial Scholar realm consisted of these ten levels.

And above the Heavenly Connection stage, there was an enormous gulf. People who managed to cross this gulf would become Martial Grandmasters.

Once they reached that step, they would already be powerful and influential figures in their local area, famous figures recognized throughout the entire [Eight Extremities World](#).

Martial Grandmasters also had four stages and ten levels. The final stage was called the Impurity Transcending Stage, as a Martial Grandmaster transcended the impure in order to reach sainthood. If a person managed to reach this stage, they would have a slim hope of advancing into the Martial Saint realm, officially becoming a Martial Saint.

In the present world, the number of known Martial Saints could be counted on one's fingers.

“His Internal Crystal Furnace can forge artifacts and spirit artifacts, but can it forge a Sacred Artifact? To a martial sect, how can any number of spirit artifacts be compared to the significance of possessing a single Martial Saint?”

Ye Jing's pupils shone with a brilliant light. Even though he had already established his dantian's qi ocean, he was only at the eighth level of the Body Refinement realm, at the mid qi-directing level, whereas Yan Zhaoge had long since reached the Martial Scholar realm, moreover already having reached the late inner-aura stage.

However, Ye Jing was full of confidence. He believed he could definitely surpass the young man who seemed like his destined adversary.

He had sufficient perseverance and resolute conviction. Furthermore, he had a trump card of his own.

Ye Jing gently let out a long breath, as his fingers twisted the dark red ring he wore on his right hand.

It did not matter that his starting point was low. He only needed to improve quickly. Then, there would definitely be a day when he caught up with and surpassed his target.

Sikong Qing looked at Ye Jing, “Junior apprentice-brother Ye, your potential is extraordinary. Hold on to your lofty ambitions and keep your feet firmly on the ground. If so, there will surely be a time when you transcend the impure and grasp sainthood.”

Ye Jing smiled and said, “I am just boasting. Senior apprentice-sister, please don’t make fun of me. Having already reached the peak stage of the Body Refinement realm, you are only one step away from becoming a Martial Scholar. Right now, you are the one most likely to surpass Yan Zhaoge, and also the one most likely to become the next Martial Scholar of Broad Creed Mountain’s young generation.”

Sikong Qing said, “However, this time, I do not think that senior apprentice-brother Yan holds any ill intent. On the contrary, Elder Cui’s words in the Assignment Hall were truly suspicious, as if they were meant to provoke conflict between our two sides. Junior apprentice-brother Ye, you must be careful of any such hidden moves in the future. There are many interpersonal relationships in the clan that are not easily understood. One could very easily be drawn into these dark undercurrents unknowingly.”

Ye Jing nodded, “I understand.”

HSSB 8: Adversary From The Past

Yan Zhaoge seldom paid mind to the thoughts of others. Whether it was Ye Jing, Sikong Qing or anyone else, he simply did not care.

While the matter of the Sealing Dragon Abyss was rather pressing, their current route crossed through Eastern Tang Kingdom. If it was just some bystander, it would not matter, but the current ruler of the Eastern Tang Kingdom was someone Yan Zhaoge needed to pay his respects to in an official capacity.

That person was more than just the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, one of East Heaven Domain's most powerful and influential figures. More importantly, he was also an old friend of Yan Zhaoge's father from when he was young, having shown much care towards Yan Zhaoge in the past.

With abnormalities having surfaced in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, the strongest martial practitioners of the Eastern Tang Kingdom as well as the experts Broad Creed Mountain had dispatched would naturally have responded already due to their close proximity. As the first to arrive on the scene, they would have already investigated and tried to suppress the anomaly. Yan Zhaoge's expedition to the danger zone, the Sealing Dragon Abyss, required that he acquire a thorough understanding of the area as well as information on the newest developments regarding it.

After visiting the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Yan Zhaoge paid an official visit to the Principal Elder of the Eastern Tang Kingdom.

This visit would not be as easygoing or harmonious as the previous one, because this member of Broad Creed Mountain here in the Eastern Tang Kingdom happened to belong to Yan Zhaoge's second apprentice-uncle's faction.

The Eastern Tang's Principal elder appeared to be a serious old man on the outside. He peered at Yan Zhaoge before, without any unnecessary nonsense, summarising what was already known about the situation in a few simple sentences. Yan Zhaoge listened and pondered at the same time.

“The Sacred Sun Clan's Chao Yuanlong has also appeared at the Dragon Sealing Abyss. Keep focused and be prepared,” the Principal Elder stated tranquilly after describing the abnormalities that had occurred within the Dragon Sealing Abyss.

Yan Zhaoge smiled and said, “Was it not because of him that the clan asked me to lead this expedition?”

In the present world, several Sacred Grounds stood shoulder-to-shoulder with one another. The Sacred Sun Clan was one of those few enormous forces which could compare to Broad Creed Mountain. In fact, its strength was even greater than Broad Creed Mountain, as it was also known by some as the number one Sacred Ground.

Chao Yuanlong was one of the Sacred Sun Clan's greatest geniuses of the younger generation; he too was known as a Heaven's chosen son. It just happened that he was of a similar age to Yan Zhaoge and was at the same level of cultivation as him as well; they were both in the late inner-aura stage. In the Eight

Extremities World, he was also a famous up-and-coming member of the young generation.

The original owner of Yan Zhaoge's body had clashed with Chao Yuanlong thrice, and all three exchanges had ended up in a tie. The two were known to be longtime adversaries of the younger generation in the Eight Extremities World.

The Eastern Tang Principal Elder said, "That person is also a rare talent. To cultivate the Piercing Sun Needle Art of the Sacred Sun Clan to the eighth level, more than just an extremely high aptitude for it is necessary; immense perseverance is also needed. If he can break through to the next level...you should understand without this old man telling you, correct?"

The Piercing Sun Needle Art was an unpopular martial art of the Sacred Sun Clan. When cultivated to a high level, it could demonstrate extremely formidable prowess. Amongst martial practitioners of the same level, it was one of the techniques existing at the peak.

However, its might was rather limited in the early stages, at least before reaching the sixth stage. Only after reaching the seventh stage would it demonstrate its power.

And it just so happened that the technique was very difficult to cultivate. The process required the cultivator to endure the pain of a raging inferno scorching their body, as if their entire body was being stabbed by ten million steel needles. Cultivating this technique was just like abusing oneself.

Moreover, the Sacred Sun Clan naturally had stronger and more profound techniques for their disciples as their cultivation progressed. Therefore, very few clan members would choose to cultivate this technique.

Yan Zhaoge spoke nonchalantly, “At his age, to have cultivated the Piercing Sun Needle Art to the ninth stage is rare indeed. In the entire history of the Sacred Sun Clan, there are no more than five who have achieved this. To have become famous within his generation at the Sacred Sun Clan, there would naturally be some aspect in which he surpasses the norm.”

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “Thank you, Elder, for your reminder. I am well aware of the situation.”

The Eastern Tang’s Principal Elder gave him a glance before calmly saying, “If that is the case, you may go. Should something happen at the Sealing Dragon Abyss, make a report immediately. Take care of the disciples on this expedition and do not allow any mishaps to occur.”

Yan Zhaoge got up and said, “Then, I will be taking my leave. Take care, Elder.”

Looking at Yan Zhaoge’s departing back, the old man’s placid eyes slowly closed, “Fickle and frivolous brat; he can speak the words, but he lacks understanding.”

The Sealing Dragon Abyss was an enormous rift within the ground that stretched horizontally across the land. Both sides were surrounded by mountains and it was so deep that its depth could not be seen. Black mist covered it all year round.

The black mist was a harmful substance. The deeper one went into the Abyss, the thicker the mist became. Even strong martial practitioners did not dare to venture inside unless necessary. There were also many strange demonic beasts born within these mists that were unusually aggressive.

Venturing deep in the Sealing Dragon Abyss where the black mist covered everything also caused bizarre spatial disorders, which made it difficult to determine one's actual location. It was also extremely difficult for those outside to rescue those lost within.

Nevertheless, there were often martial practitioners who entered the place to seek treasure because the Sealing Dragon Abyss produced many special treasures that were one-of-a-kind, or at least rare.

Of course, many of those who entered were never seen again alive.

Therefore one had to carefully consider the risks, entering the Sealing Dragon Abyss which was a place famous for its peril.

Yan Zhaoge and his expedition left the Eastern Tang capital and traveled all the way to the outskirts of this danger zone.

“Do you all know the history of the Sealing Dragon Abyss?” Standing on the mountain ridge right beside the steep drop, Yan Zhaoge asked.

“The Eight Extremities World is divided into eight vast Domains: Heaven, Earth, Wind, Thunder, Water, Fire, Mountain, and River.”

“One of these, the Earth Domain, has become a wasteland after many years of transformation. It is the world’s greatest danger zone. Because of that, we now call that place ‘Hell’.”

“And many giant cracks in Hell extend to the surrounding Domains. This Dragon Sealing Abyss happens to be one of the largest of these cracks. And a large part of this Abyss happens to pass through our Broad Creed Mountain’s Heaven Domain.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “Abnormalities in the Dragon Sealing Abyss without any clear cause; we will need to remain prudent.”

All the Broad Creed Mountain disciples nodded to signal their understanding.

Under Yan Zhaoge’s lead, everyone slowly walked down into the rift.

Even though this was a dangerous place, people had already built paths at its outskirts.

Lanterns illuminated the path at fixed intervals. Thin streams of green smoke steadily rose and partitioned off the black mist from a small area allowing people to advance forward.

This was Broad Creed Mountain and the Eastern Tang Kingdom's work. When the elites of both forces had reacted and come forth to suppress the anomaly, they had created this pathway. Afterwards, they had guarded the Abyss after contacting Broad Creed Mountain as they waited for people to come and investigate the abnormalities.

Had the anomaly not been promptly suppressed, the black mist might have surged out of the rift.

Yan Zhaoge's group visited those local forces responsible for guarding this place, then started to advance deeper into the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

Yan Zhaoge walked at the very front. Part of his attention was on his surroundings as he pondered within his mind, "As expected, this mist is indeed formed of chaotic streams of baleful qi. Even though it can be used to create something that benefits the Internal Crystal Furnace, the substance itself is harmful in many ways, while not possessing a single benefit.

"No wait... perhaps it isn't without a single merit?

"There is a large difference between the strength increments to be gained breaking through from the mid to late inner aura stage

and from the late inner aura stage to the early outer aura stage. The latter produces a much larger increment in strength. While it can't be said to be 'the difference between heaven and earth', it is at least still like shedding one's mortal body and being reborn again."

Yan Zhaoge thought to himself: "When the aura is externalised, the body's defenses become extremely strong. If an inner aura Martial Scholar attacks an outer aura Martial Scholar with all his might, assuming that the outer aura Martial Scholar does not defend his weak points, there might still be a chance of success. Otherwise, he would just be wasting his strength."

"On the other hand, an outer aura Martial Scholar can release aura-qi outside of his body, in doing so demonstrating amazing attack power. Breaking through an inner aura Martial Scholar's aura-qi defense layer would therefore be quite easy."

"While externalising the aura requires only a single step, that step is a wide gulf that is difficult to cross; breaking through is not easy. The main difficulty is the large amount of time that is required to meticulously refine one's aura-qi and temper one's body."

Walking through the Sealing Dragon Abyss surrounded by unknown dangers, Yan Zhaoge unexpectedly smiled.

"However, if one uses the Vortex Reversal Technique of the Heaven-Thwarting Mantra with some modifications, he should be able to conduct these chaotic streams of baleful qi into his own body. With this technique, trash can be changed into treasure; a

great whetstone can be obtained for polishing one's aura-qi. This is perfect for helping me break through the hurdle of solidifying my aura outside of my body, allowing me to step from the first to the second major stage of the Martial Scholar realm."

HSSB 9: Taking The Road Less Traveled, Acting Cool Without Explanation

The group explored the Sealing Dragon Abyss, travelling for some time. When they stopped for rest, Yan Zhaoge immediately sat down cross-legged and began to meditate.

Amongst the group, Ye Jing's gaze focused on Yan Zhaoge.

“There will eventually be a day when I will defeat you. When that time comes, let's see if you can maintain your loftiness, your disdain, and that prideful look on your face...”

Other than his old grudge, the current Ye Jing felt a strange emotion that could not be described when faced with Yan Zhaoge.

It was somewhat like the mutual appreciation between geniuses, but there was more a sense of awkwardness and annoyance.

It was almost like they were natural adversaries, as he subconsciously felt like he was being suppressed, further leading to him feeling out of sorts.

“Strangely, the seed of Li Flame True Fire he mentioned back in the Assignment Hall should be extremely useful for me as well,” Ye Jing thought within his mind, “If it falls into his hands and is used for his purposes, that would truly be a waste...”

Just as Ye Jing was thinking thus, his eyes suddenly widened and progressively widened some more.

Sikong Qing and the others now also discovered that something unusual was currently taking place. Yan Zhaoge was currently cycling the dreaded black mist avoided by everyone into his body.

This act in their eyes was just like suicide by poison.

Yan Zhaoge did not care about what bystanders would think. Looking inside his body, chaotic streams of baleful qi could be seen gathering under the control of the secret technique as it formed something similar to a grinding wheel. Then, affected by surging aura-qi, it began spinning incessantly.

As it spun, the aura-qi inside Yan Zhaoge's body became increasingly sharp like a blade being polished, and he could faintly detect his qi starting to penetrate its way out of his body.

"Excellent. Compared to normal cultivation, the efficiency is three to five times higher, perhaps even more. Even though it's only applicable for training from the inner aura to the outer aura stage, it can still save me a large amount of time. The outer aura Martial Scholar realm is now close at hand."

Yan Zhaoge nodded in satisfaction. His cultivation session having reaped him sufficient benefits, he stopped his cultivation for now. As he opened his eyes, the first thing he saw was a bunch of his shocked fellow disciples staring dazedly at him.

“It’s really easy to attract the eyes of others when one deviates off the usual path...” Yan Zhaoge thought to himself as he grinned, “This bro’s cool existence, truly needs no explanation.”

The eyes of the young disciples flashed with sudden understanding, “Due to the abnormalities in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, the black mist is more turbulent than before. These changes which have never been seen before are bizarre and cannot be explained. Senior apprentice-brother Yan took the mist into his body in order to better analyze these changes, right? But this type of method is far too dangerous.”

Yan Zhaoge was surprised for a bit, as he was slightly speechless at people’s ability to make up nonsense regarding things they didn’t understand.

Everyone responded with a sudden realization. They nodded their heads, having been convinced, “So that’s how it was.”

Ye Jing still had some doubts as his finger subconsciously stroked the dark red ring he wore.

Seeing Ye Jing, Yan Zhaoge couldn’t help but roll his eyes even though he did it so fast that no one else could perceive it, “He actually does have a ring...”

While he probably had his own fortunate encounters, secret methods, and other things Yan Zhaoge didn’t know about, Ye Jing’s quick rise, speedy cultivation, and, more importantly, outstanding abilities that were a notch above the rest, were

obviously a result that stemmed from this ring.

However, Yan Zhaoge did not care about that ring at all.

At this time, everyone else was shouting his praise and proclaiming their admiration, “Even if a Martial Scholar had a cultivation higher than senior apprentice-brother Yan, they still would not dare to directly take the black mist into their body, right?”

To them, the black mist was something that could take their life at any time, whereas Yan Zhaoge seemed completely indifferent to it.

“Anyway, this isn’t something you should rashly imitate. Otherwise, it would be like opening the door for a thief or letting a wolf into your room; inadvisable.” Yan Zhaoge said.

He stood up and brushed the dust off his clothes. Then, he took the lead and started walking once more. The others hurried to catch up.

At this time, a tall figure sped towards them from behind group and caught up with Yan Zhaoge. This person was Ah Hu.

Yan Zhaoge did not stop. His pace continued undisturbed, neither slow nor fast. When Ah Hu came up beside him, he sent a sound transmission, “Young Master, we have the information. While we haven’t been able to verify anything for certain, rumors

say that Ye Jing has attracted the discerning eyes of Elder Shi after the new disciple youth competition.”

Yan Zhaoge turned and gave Ah Hu a look after hearing this news.

Ah Hu nodded, “It is rumored that Elder Shi admires how he constantly strove to improve himself in order to get to this point and his persevering disposition. He is prepared to observe Ye Jing for a while and should no problems arise, he intends to accept Ye Jing as his direct disciple.”

Yan Zhaoge revealed a sneer, “No wonder...”

This Elder was not like those other Elders. Elder Shi could not be compared to the Elder Cui from before, and also not the Principal Elder overseeing Eastern Tang Kingdom. None of them was anywhere close to his level.

Elder Cui was only a normal Assignment Hall elder; furthermore, he was the type that had slowly achieved his position through countless years of accumulation.

The Acting Elder of the Eastern Tang Kingdom was a Principal Elder, but above him, there was still the Eastern Region’s Disciplinary Elder who watched over the entire East Heaven Region.

Far from those two, Elder Shi was the Chief Elder of the

Punishment hall of the entire clan, someone who wielded the power to enforce all the rules and punishments. In terms of rank, he was equal to the Eastern Region's Disciplinary Elder, but in terms of authority and power, he was far stronger.

He was also Yan Zhaoge's eldest apprentice-uncle, and Broad Creed Mountain's current Clan Chief's eldest direct disciple.

This man was upright and outspoken. He considered himself less talented than Yan Zhaoge's father as well as his second apprentice-uncle, and had thus publicly announced his withdrawal from the candidacy for the successor for the position of Clan Chief early on. He was willing to support whoever won the race, because everything was for the sake of developing the clan.

In truth, while Elder Shi considered himself as less capable than his two junior apprentice-brothers, his actual ability was actually comparable to the two. Moreover, he was a veteran Martial Grandmaster, one of Broad Creed Mountain's renowned peak experts. In the entire Eight Extremities World, his prowess was known far and wide.

While not participating in the race to be successor of the clan, his opinion weighed very heavily nonetheless. Even the current Clan Chief regarded his opinion very highly.

No matter who would become the next Clan Chief, he would continue to occupy the position of the Punishment Hall's Chief Elder. He was a super big shot of the clan, not just in name but also in reality, .

At the present time, this eldest apprentice-uncle had remained neutral in the competition between Yan Zhaoge's father and his second apprentice-uncle.

Considering Ye Jing's attitude towards Yan Zhaoge, should Ye Jing be killed for what seemed to be the jealousy of a love rival, Elder Shi's reaction could easily be imagined.

Even if there was no evidence, only suspicion, it could still affect the opposite party's perception of him and, by extension, their side.

Ah Hu continued, "About this matter, Ye Jing himself is probably not in the know. Elder Shi desires to observe him for a while longer."

He looked at Yan Zhaoge again and said irritably, "Young Master, this time, I'm afraid you might really need to look after that Ye Jing. Otherwise, if he dies in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, even if you didn't do it, all the blame will still fall on you."

Yan Zhaoge twitched his lips and thought to himself, "As if. How can someone possessing the Main Character halo die so easily?"

"After I enter the Sealing Dragon Abyss, you will be responsible for maintaining the link between us and the outside world. Thank you for your trouble; you might have to make rather many trips."

The expedition proceeded along the path with the green smoke lanterns that led to the Sealing Dragon Abyss. Quickly, they reached the end of this path.

Yan Zhaoge stopped walking. He took out a special compass, which served to prevent disorientation and stabilize their path, as well as a green-coloured candle. After lighting the candle, he brandished it and walked into the heavy black mist. Everyone else performed the same action, carefully following behind Yan Zhaoge.

Leaving the lantern's suppressive seal, the black mist of the surroundings immediately grew more violent and turbulent, like enormous raging waves charging at the group.

If not for Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu shielding everyone from the front, the rest of the group would only be able to remain in this black mist for a short while even with their candles lit.

“As expected, the chaotic streams of baleful qi are much thicker, with the airflow far faster than before. There is clearly something causing this disturbance.” Yan Zhaoge's eyes looked around as his gaze pierced through the heavy black mist.

With the field conditions such that a person would not be able to see his fingers even after having stretched out his hands, even Yan Zhaoge's eyes could only see the objects nearby.

An indistinct red light quickly flashed past like lightning in the night. This type of phenomenon was something that not been seen

in the Sealing Dragon Abyss prior to this.

Without needing Yan Zhaoge's instructions, Ah Hu stretched out his hand and grabbed at the light.

When his hand returned, a piece of something red could be seen in his palm. In the dark, it faintly glowed as though it were alive, thrashing about continuously almost like it wanted to enter Ah Hu's flesh.

"Something from the outside..." Yan Zhaoge said after shooting it a glance.

His eyes immediately narrowed into slits, "As I thought, this isn't a natural anomaly, but, rather, something that's caused by humans."

HSSB 10: Close The Door, Release The Ye Jing

Following the vibrations of the specialized compass, Yan Zhaoge and the rest of the people traversed the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

Flashes of red light occasionally passed by only to be caught by Ah Hu, who used his aura-qi to constrain the fragments and then sealed them into specialized crystals.

They traveled for half a day. When suddenly, the black mist that were chaotic streams of baleful qi seemed to slightly calm down and thin out.

Ah Hu who was beside Yan Zhaoge said, “Young Master, we have arrived at the center of a vortex.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded.

In the Sealing Dragon Abyss, there were occasionally areas of relative calm, resembling the central region of a vortex and similar to the eye of a tornado, surrounded by danger all around but rather safe in the middle. This kind of region tended to vary in size and in location. Even the number of regions tended to change. With the passage of time, these areas could even experience movement and transformations.

“The center region of a vortex is relatively safe. Everyone can rest for a bit,” Yan Zhaoge said.

“Normally, this kind of area tends to easily produce unusual treasures. Because this environment is somewhat safe, it is also a good place to hunt for treasure and pick medicine. Everyone may move around independently; maybe you’ll even get lucky. However, please mind your safety. This is the Sealing Dragon Abyss after all.”

Ye Jing, Sikong Qing and the other young disciples all voiced their assent and then curiously investigated their surroundings.

Yan Zhaoge took his special compass and carefully examined it, “This vortex’s center region seems to be more special than expected...”

“Hmmm?” Yan Zhaoge had a sudden premonition. He lifted his head and casually swept his gaze over everything as he calmly said, “Everyone, get back.”

Yan Zhaoge swept his sleeve and a flash of green light pierced the air like lightning through the night sky, lighting up the surrounding canyon.

A golden glow that had been half hidden in the black mist became clearly visible. An enormous body appeared. This was a cyclopan devil python, the golden glow from before having radiated from its single eye.

However, just as the devil python appeared, the green light had already arrived at its neck while faintly releasing a dragon’s roar.

The golden glow was extinguished almost immediately, the devil python releasing a hissing cry that was quickly cut off with a grunt followed briefly by silence.

A moment later, a loud thump could be heard. This was the sound of the devil python's huge body falling to the ground.

“Golden-eyed python, a native of the Dragon Sealing Abyss. Its entire body can be said to be a treasure, at least to the current you. You may divide the body among yourselves. Split the materials evenly.” Right after the green light flashed, Yan Zhaoge had already shifted his focus back onto the specialized compass.

Everyone else only returned to their senses at this time. Looking at the enormous python corpse that was at least several tens of meters long, the disciples secretly bit their tongues in wonder.

The golden-eyed python's charge just now had been incredibly fast, fierce and violent, not at all inferior to a practitioner in the Martial Scholar realm. Remembering its ability to move without any presence, the disciples felt a lingering fear.

While dismembering the python, the group discovered its scales were tough and soft at the same time, their defence comparable to an artifact's.

Even though the golden-eyed python's blood and qi had already declined after death, they still had a lot of difficulty cutting apart the its scales despite having activated their artifacts.

And yet this golden-eyed python had been killed by Yan Zhaoge in just a single sword strike. The cut was as smooth as glass without any rough edges, like tofu split straight through by a knife.

“Senior apprentice-brother Yan’s notorious self-created sword style, the Coiling Dragon Sleeve. Even though this isn’t the first this I’ve seen it, every time I see it, I can only gasp in amazement.” Some young disciples couldn’t help but swallow at the thought.

A young disciple suddenly asked, “Senior apprentice-brother Yan, what is that?”

Yan Zhaoge lifted his head and looked over to see a faraway cliff that had been enshrouded in black mist. A white light spontaneously flashed by. It was even faster than the golden-eyed python had been.

“That is a Light Spirit Cat,” Yan Zhaoge took a brief look before withdrawing his gaze, “Harmless and beneficial.”

The entire group was surprised.

Ah Hu, who was by Yan Zhaoge’s side, grinned and said, “The Sealing Dragon Abyss’s environment is harsh, with plenty of demonic beasts. Their natures are generally mostly fierce and savage, but this Light Spirit Cat is an exception. Although it is small, its strength is, surprisingly, pretty good. Its speed, especially, is fast as lightning, much faster than that of normal demonic beasts. However, its nature is very gentle. It doesn’t

attack and its diet is composed of plants. It mostly eats the plants native to the Sealing Dragon Abyss in order to survive.”

Ah Hu pointed at the flickering white light, “Moreover, this animal is empathetic. It is kindhearted and will help humans who meet danger here. In the future, should you enter the Sealing Dragon Abyss alone and unfortunately face danger, perhaps you might receive assistance from this type of beast and scrape through the ordeal.”

Ye Jing, Sikong Qing and the others couldn’t help but click their tongues in wonder after hearing Ah Hu’s explanation. They developed a favorable impression towards that Light Spirit Cat, as they made their way towards it.

The flickering white light had also stopped moving. Its true appearance having been revealed, it looked like a tiny kitten the size of one’s palm. A flickering white glow detailed a large pattern that covered its entire body. Its appearance exuded an impression of gentleness and also cleverness.

The Light Spirit Cat also observed the Broad Creed Mountain disciples with curiosity.

A female disciple looked at it with interest, wanting to get closer. The Light Spirit Cat retreated in response. The young girl stopped her advance. The tiny cat stopped as well.

“Senior apprentice-brother Yan, is it possible to tame this little cat?” asked the young girl in a pitiable tone after retreating to Yan

Zhaoge's side.

Yan Zhaoge thought it over before saying, "Do you remember that when we were exploring the Sealing Dragon Abyss, all of you collected the serpent oath grass? That type of spirit grass is the Light Spirit Cat's favorite food. You can try using that. As long as you harbor no ill intentions, it should be willing to get close to you. However, if you want to bring it out of the Sealing Dragon Abyss, you will need to put in a lot more time and effort."

The young girl cheered, "Thank you, senior apprentice-brother. I'm going to try!"

Saying thus, she carefully took out several stalks of spirit grass from her pack and walked towards the Light Spirit Cat.

After the initial wariness and familiarization period, one girl and one cat gradually became friends.

The other Broad Creed Mountain disciples also took out their serpent oath grass after seeing the first girl's success. They also started feeding and playing. Suddenly, the tiny cat was overwhelmingly doted on by everyone.

Even those who did not have any interest in playing were smiling as they watched this heartwarming scene.

The Light Spirit Cat became a streak of white light in the canyon as it ran back and forth, stopping every once in a while. The young

girl followed behind it. The dangerous Sealing Dragon Abyss as of this moment no longer seemed so sinister.

In the same canyon a few cliffs away, a man could be seen lying on a big rock as if on his last breath. The shadow of death could consume him at any time.

The female disciple from Broad Creed Mountain was alarmed. Then, she suddenly saw a white light flash by. The Light Spirit Cat had appeared. It carefully observed for a while before approaching the man lying on the big rock.

Remembering what Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu said earlier, the young girl felt relieved.

The delicate-seeming Light Spirit Cat climbed up to the man and used its mouth to grab his collar. Then, with a toss of its head, the cat managed to drag the man along. Despite its tiny size, its strength was quite impressive.

But just then, the young man who had seemed to be on his last breath suddenly reached out and grabbed the Light Spirit Cat before sitting up.

The cat let out a screech and struggled with all its might as the youth began laughing loudly, “Senior apprentice-brother’s method is definitely effective. If not for it, then it would really be impossible to catch this little thing. It’s just as fast as a Martial Scholar.”

The female disciple of Broad Creed Mountain was given a scare, “What are you doing?”

The young man turned to look at her before carelessly saying, “What’s it to you?”

The young girl frowned and said, “That Light Spirit Cat thought you were in danger and tried to save you out of kindness. And you actually pretended to be in trouble just to catch it?”

“This tiny thing is stupid. It fell for my trick so it can’t complain,” the young man said carelessly, “All living things have their own, natural gifts. God gave demonic beasts their incredible speed and we humans got intelligence. Why should I use my weakness to measure against this thing’s strength? Using brains to defeat demonic beasts is only natural.”

The young girl was furious. She said, “Clearly, it’s you who are despicable. You’re just abusing its kindness.”

That young man chuckled and said, “Since when did people from Broad Creed Mountain have authority over the matters of my Sacred Sun Clan?”

The female disciple of Broad Creed Mountain carefully took a look and discovered the youth wore white clothes with a red-bordered sleeve and a sun-patterned emblem. This attire was indeed the Sacred Sun Clan uniform.

The young man lifted the Light Spirit Cat and used his fingernails to make a cut on the little cat's neck. Blood immediately spurted everywhere.

“So what if I catch it? The Light Spirit demonic core in this creature's head is my true goal.”

The Sun Saint Clan disciple smilingly said, “In this world, whoever has the bigger fists makes the rules. If you can beat me, you can also naturally steal this little thing away. If you can't beat me, no amount of words can make a difference. You Broad Creed Mountain disciples; do you have any abilities other than using that mouth of yours?”

The young girl looked at that palm-sized kitten as its body twitched yet could not even give voice to its despair. She could not help but get increasingly angry till she could no longer suppress her rage, and charged forward.

Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan possessed neighboring territories, and there were often conflicts and fights between the young disciples of the two sides.

Some other disciples of Broad Creed Mountain had also caught up at this point. Seeing the situation, they also stepped forward without hesitation to assist their fellow disciple.

Unfortunately, the other side was not alone either. Other members of the Sacred Sun Clan now made their way over as well. The battlefield suddenly became messy, developing into a group

battle where Broad Creed Mountain disciples were being ganged up on by Sacred Sun Clan disciples.

“Young Master, it’s people from the Sacred Sun Clan.” Ah Hu returned to Yan Zhaoge’s side to report the situation and the process of how it had occurred.

Yan Zhaoge asked, “Do they have a Martial Scholar?”

Ah Hu replied, “None have appeared so far.”

“Then it’s simple,” said Yan Zhaoge as he shrugged his shoulders.

“Close the door! Release the Ye Jing!”

HSSB 11: Using Equipment To Crush The Opposition

Ah Hu revealed a stumped expression. He did not understand the deeper profound meaning behind his young master's simple orders.

Nevertheless, he carried out Yan Zhaoge's directives to the letter.

And what unfolded confirmed that situation had been well within Yan Zhaoge's expectations.

The young disciples of Broad Creed Mountain had started out at a disadvantage. Still, once Ye Jing and Sikong Qing arrived on site, they quickly gained the upper hand.

As both sides fought each other, the fight progressively got more serious. This group battle in the Sealing Dragon Abyss resulted in both sides drawing their weapons.

The Sacred Sun Clan was a Sacred Ground on the same level as or perhaps even superior to Broad Creed Mountain. Their young disciples at the Body Refinement realm would only dare enter a danger zone like the Dragon Sealing Abyss for tempering purposes. Those that came were all major talents with strength surpassing those of the same age and cultivation realm.

For this very reason, their clan was willing to invest in them. Each of them were wealthy by average standards and possessed

their own demi-artifact.

The most talented among them even possessed their own artifact.

There were only twenty Sacred Sun Clan members, yet they had eight low-grade artifacts amongst them. The moment they brought out these artifacts, the surrounding spiritual qi surged and a bright glow lit up everything within a hundred meters.

Then... these Sacred Sun Clan disciples were suddenly shocked stupid.

The sixteen Broad Creed Mountain disciples facing them each brought out their own artifact. In fact, a few of them actually had more than one artifact.

What followed was an earth-shattering collision between the two sects. Eventually, the Sacred Sun Clan disciples, who only possessed eight artifacts, fell in dire straits like a small sampan trying to withstand a raging storm, about to sink at any moment.

All the Sacred Sun Clan disciples were angry enough to vomit blood, “The Sealing Dragon Abyss is indeed a danger zone, but isn’t this Broad Creed Mountain too extravagant? They actually gave each disciple their own artifact!”

“Maybe they have some sort of special mission? But, who would send a bunch of disciples only in the Body Refinement realm on a

special mission?”

“They’re not here for us, are they?”

“They have too many artifacts! A wise man knows when to fight and when to run. Let’s retreat and get revenge another day!”

The Sacred Sun Clan disciples retreated as they fought. Ye Jing, Sikong Qing, and the others pursued them all the way.

The combat advantage granted to cultivators of their level by artifacts was not small. Therefore, the Sacred Sun Clan disciples had difficulty even just trying to get away.

After a strenuous retreat to their temporary base within the calm central area of the vortex, they once again surrounded by the Broad Creed Mountain disciples.

The Sacred Sun Clan disciple who had caught the Light Spirit Cat laughed maliciously, “Very well. Does your Broad Creed Mountain want to go against my Sacred Sun Clan? This Light Spirit Cat is undomesticated. It’s not something you raised. I caught it, so, naturally, it is mine to deal with however I want. What right do you have to interfere?”

The female Broad Creed Mountain disciple who had chased the Light Spirit Cat to this place shouted back, “That little cat is close to me. I am going to raise it!”

The youth snorted, “I don’t see your name on it.”

The girl’s rage exploded, “You...!”

The leading Sacred Sun Clan disciple coldly said, “To provoke my Sacred Sun Clan over a single demonic beast, has Broad Creed Mountain recently grown stronger? Do not forget who’s the number one Sacred Ground in the Eight Extremities World.”

The Broad Creed Mountain disciples faintly knit their brows. Even though the Sacred Grounds were equally ranked, there was still some difference in strength between them. Currently, the Sacred Sun Clan who was flourishing the most had an attitude which was tough and tyrannical.

That Sun Saint Clan disciple said, “You guys are the newer disciples of Broad Creed Mountain, right? Inciting conflict between two Sacred Grounds; this kind of responsibility, is it something you can bear?”

With her ice sword, Sikong Qing blasted wind and frost across the sky, suppressing the artifacts on the other side till they could not make a single move. “A clash between our two Sacred Grounds is naturally something that I, a mere Body Refinement realm disciple of the younger generation, cannot bear responsibility for. However, the only thing I can manage and the only thing I need to manage is this sword in my hand.”

She seemed to have shown weakness, but her words, ‘a mere Body Refinement realm disciple of the younger generation’, caused

her opponent to feel his face flush with fiery heat.

If Sikong Qing was a Body Refinement realm disciple who could not bear responsibility for a clash between the two Sacred Grounds, her opponent was actually the same. Where then had he gotten the qualifications to speak so boldly?

Conflicts between the younger generation of Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan were actually commonplace. Each side had their own victories. Unless the matter was truly important, this type of thing would not easily involve the higher-ups of each clan. In the eyes of the senior generation, these conflicts were merely a from of tempering for the younger generation.

Losing a battle meant losing face. However, regaining face was a simple matter of winning the next battle. These exchanges would not easily lead to a full-out war.

A full-out clash between two of the giants of the current world would not be a simple matter. It would involve far too many things, and there were also the other Sacred Grounds watching hungrily on the side. This type of conflict would not easily occur.

However, should this type of conflict actually erupt, it would definitely unfold on a world-changing scale.

Ye Jing coldly smiled as he said, “You Sacred Sun Clan disciples can’t beat us. So now, the only thing you know how to do is bring up your clan?”

The Sacred Sun Clan had been at the peak of the world of martial practitioners in recent years. Their disciples were truly outstanding and thus had become accustomed to acting overbearingly when outside the sect. This was especially true of the Sacred Sun Clan's newest disciples who were even more liable to run amok without fear. Their attitude towards disciples from Broad Creed Mountain and the other Sacred Grounds had gradually grown to be tainted with arrogance and contempt.

In previous conflicts between the younger generations, the Sacred Sun Clan had earned more victories than defeats against Broad Creed Mountain on the whole. The disadvantaged state they were currently in, therefore, had left them totally in turmoil and disbelief.

That Sacred Sun Clan disciple had been inattentive with his words. As such, Ye Jing and Sikong Qing had crushed him verbally.

However, he did not give up, snorting coldly as he said, "Heh. Today, you have more artifacts, so you'd better make sure we all die here in the Dragon Sealing Abyss if you have the ability. Otherwise, this debt will be repaid twofold someday. Do you think a mere dozen or more low-grade artifacts matter to my Sacred Sun Clan?"

The Broad Creed Mountain disciples only sneered in response, "Back before we were using artifacts, were you guys winning?"

The Sacred Sun Clan disciples could only seethe with anger. Before everyone had started using artifacts, their side had only been at a minor disadvantage. Who would have thought that after everyone had brought out their artifacts, the gap between the two sides had only grown wider, and they had ended up getting beaten up like useless grandsons. They hadn't even been able to escape successfully.

In contrast, the Broad Creed Mountain disciples were greatly invigorated with their spirits soaring to unprecedented heights.

“This is all thanks to senior apprentice-brother Yan. The feeling of using equipment to crush people is truly invigorating.”

Just as they said that, the artifact in Ye Jing's hand suddenly began to vibrate.

Not only him but all the artifacts of all the Broad Creed Mountain disciples also began vibrating as if in warning.

Then, a single figure appeared in front of everyone without warning.

Framing this person seemed to be over ten million sharp needle-like rays of golden light shining in concert, a dazzling display that incited awe.

As if in response, the artifacts of Ye Jing, Sikong Qing and the others flared with the light of spiritual qi. They rushed

simultaneously to attack the person who had just appeared.

Sharp and pointy golden lights flashed and all sixteen artifacts along with their owners were forced to retreat.

Those sharp and pointy golden lights were like real metal weapons. When they collided with the artifacts, an ear-piercing sound was released.

The Broad Creed Mountain disciples felt those acupuncture needle-like lights gently pricking them. Then, their previously excited blood and qi suddenly stopped flowing. Their cultivation seemed to disappear like snow on a hot sunny day, making it difficult to gather any strength.

The dazzling light dissipated to reveal a youth dressed in a golden-bordered white robe. He stood arrogantly in front of everyone.

Without doing anything other than simply standing there, his presence was like an invisible field that pressed down on the surroundings, completely suppressing everyone present.

Then, his entire person became like a black hole, creating a large suction force, such that the Broad Creed Mountain disciples could not have distanced themselves even if they had wanted to. Instead, they were forced closer to him by the suction force.

The low-grade artifacts of the Broad Creed Mountain disciples

had all been blown out of their hands from the earlier exchange. They were currently on the ground, flashing with a slight radiance.

The Broad Creed Mountain disciples wanted to recall their artifacts through their spiritual link but the artifacts merely vibrated on the ground, unable to move, having been suppressed by that newly arrived person's strength.

That youth held both his hand behind his back and apathetically said, "This one is the Sacred Sun Clan's Chao Yuanlong. Which Martial Scholar has your Broad Creed Mountain sent to lead your group?"

HSSB 12: Dragon Sealing Abyss, An Inauspicious Omen For Yan Zhaoge?

Amongst the younger generation of martial practitioners, Chao Yuanlong had a resounding reputation—in part because of his position in the Sacred Sun Clan, but more so because of his boundless prospects and immense personal strength. Only half a year ago, while journeying outside the clan, he encountered three enemies—each of whom had the same cultivation as he did. Despite having fought one against three, he had managed to defeat them. This simultaneously served as a demonstration of the Sacred Sun Clan's power and also as a reminder as to why Chao Yuanlong, amongst all the disciples of the Sacred Ground, was qualified to be the leader of this generation's disciples.

At this moment, the sudden appearance of Chao Yuanlong caused everyone present to feel suppression from his cultivation base. This disparity between the two sides was far from trivial—causing the disciples from Broad Creed Mountain, each of whom would usually be considered an expert within the clan, to feel immense pressure.

Someone subconsciously opened their mouth and answered, “We were following senior apprentice-brother Yan's instructions...”

Before he had even finished speaking, Chao Yuanlong's eyes exploded out with an intense radiance like that of the sun—forcing everybody to shield their gazes from the intense light.

Chao Yuanlong asked “Yan Zhaoge?”

All of the surrounding people were greatly shocked, and a Broad Creed Mountain disciple responded, “That’s right! It was senior apprentice-brother Yan who led us!”

The light issuing from his eyes became even more blinding. Chao Yuanlong took one step forward.

All of the artifacts and weapons scattered among the Broad Creed Mountain disciples suddenly began vibrating. Though each of the artifacts was truly valuable treasure, in the end, they were still just tools, and lacked consciousness. If the spiritual connection with their owners was broken, then they would become useless.

As Chao Yuanlong stepped forward, the Broad Creed Mountain disciples felt a sudden jolt from their magical treasures and realized that their spiritual connection with their treasures had been forcibly severed. Chao Yuanlong’s indifferent voice rang out, “Does your Broad Creed Mountain have a surfeit of magical treasures? Trying to show off in front of my Sacred Sun Clan; leave these treasures behind for us.”

“Though this one here is not interested in any of these things, they are quite suitable to give to my martial brothers and sisters as playthings for a couple of years. Since you were trying to use these tools to fight against my fellow disciples, then we will have to take them as amends for your offense.”

He randomly picked a few disciples from the crowd behind him and gestured with his hand. “Each of you should select a fitting

treasure.”

The Sacred Sun Clan disciples all laughed and said, “Thank you, senior apprentice-brother!”

The Broad Creed Mountain disciples all trembled in anger, but after Chao Yuanlong swept his cold gaze over them, they could only steel themselves suffer this humiliation. His gaze stopped on Sikong Qing – “This one knows that you also have a mid-grade magical treasure. Why don’t you take it out so I can have a look?”

Sikong Qing frowned and fiercely returned Chao Yuanlong’s gaze. Ye Jing kept his face apathetic, and, almost imperceptibly, rubbed the pale red ring on his finger.

Chao Yuanlong stood there with his hands clasped behind his back with his entire body radiating intense sunlight which seemed almost like countless golden needles. “This one didn’t come to bully you juniors; go back and call out Yan Zhaoge to come see this one. This one will wait for him here.”

Chao Yuanlong then added with a cold laugh, “If he dares.”

Chao Yuanlong had his entire body covered by golden light, with every single pore on his body pouring out seemingly endless amounts of radiance and seemed to spectators almost as if his entire body was painted with gold dust. Gazing at Chao Yuanlong, even his fellow disciples seemed to express equal parts veneration and fear. This senior brother, who was able to endure the pain of having training every single muscle, every single hair, and every

piece of skin being refined by the fire energy, used his unshakable commitment to cultivation and terrifying insight into magical techniques to cultivate the Piercing Sun Needle Art to an extremely profound level.

Given his harsh attitude towards himself, towards other people, the level of his ruthlessness and severity could easily be imagined.

The Sacred Sun Clan disciples, despite coming from the same sect as Chao Yuanlong, also felt dread towards him. “Senior apprentice-brother Chao has indeed reached the ninth level of the Piercing Sun Needle Art!”

“Aura manifestation, this is a skill that only outer aura masters should possess, yet Chao Yuanlong can actually use this technique only at the late phase of the inner aura stage. Even though it falls short of the technique used by an actual outer aura Martial Scholar, it is terrifying nonetheless. No wonder he can so easily suppress others of the same cultivation realm!”

As the onlookers were thinking this, Chao Yuanlong’s presence was still climbing without stopped! It was as if his entire person was transforming into small sun, making others even afraid to look at him.

The black mist in the surrounding area momentarily seemed to be greatly reduced.

Without even needing to make a move, just by vibrating his aura-qi, Chao Yuanlong caused the rock in the nearby canyon to shatter.

“No—it’s not the ninth level—it’s actually the tenth level!” This time, even Chao Yuanlong’s disciples were scared out of their wits. “Senior Brother Chao has actually managed to successfully cultivate the entire technique to completion!”

The Sacred Sun Clan disciples looked at each other in shock. Even though not many people cultivated the Piercing Sun Needle Art, from ancient times until now, the number of people who cultivated it was not insignificant. Yet, if one was to talk about those who had fully comprehended the technique to the tenth level, then Chao Yuanlong... was the only one!

Though this group of Broad Creed Mountain disciples did not know the specifics of the technique that Chao Yuanlong cultivated and weren’t aware of the significance of his achievement, the terrifying aura that was emanating from his body caused them all to be clear about the awe-inspiring might of the person in front of them. Previously, not even Yan Zhaoge had demonstrated such a level of power, causing many of those present to feel unease in their hearts.

Senior apprentice-brother Yan, would he be able to emerge victorious from this fight?

“Since the last time we fought, Yan Zhaoge should also have some improvement right? At least, he should be able to resist the ninth level of my Piercing Sun Needle Art, though I don’t know if it’s possible for him to resist the tenth level of my consummate Needle technique!”

From the middle of the small sun, Chao Yuanlong's cold voice issued out: "This one believes that Yan Zhaoge will probably have some improvement, but if it isn't enough, this one will be disappointed."

"Although the last three times we fought, we were unable to determine a victor, but this time this matter will finally be concluded."

Suddenly, a Sacred Sun Clan disciple laughingly proclaimed — "Sealing Dragon Abyss, Sealing Dragon, ha! This location, for this Broad Creed Young Master, isn't this name foretelling his defeat?"

Upon hearing this exclamation, all of the Sacred Sun Clan disciples immediately revealed mocking expressions.

"To not come is admitting to his own humiliation, yet coming is just [slapping his own face to make his face more imposing](#), and won't just be a matter of losing face."

TN Note: Chinese idiom that means embarrassing yourself by pretending to possess greater abilities than in reality

Just like Chao Yuanlong's defining technique was his Piercing Sun Needle Art, Yan Zhaoge had a self-created trademark technique known as the Coiling Dragon Sleeve, also well known by numerous people.

The faces of the Broad Creed Mountain disciples present became even more unsightly.

Chao Yuanlong unenthusiastically said, “Towards “hiding one’s strength to suddenly attack”, this one has no interest.”

“You disciples—go back and directly tell Yan Zhaoge, this one has already reached the consummate stage of the tenth level of the Piercing Sun Needle Art and ask him if he still has the guts to compete with me.”

Before Chao Yuanlong had even finished speaking, the Sealing Dragon Abyss suddenly resounded with an unfettered sound.

“I am already here.”

An green light flashed through the black mist, resembling a lightning bolt tearing apart the night sky!

“Yan Zhaoge, still using your same old Coiling Dragon Sleeve?” Chao Yuanlong let out a roar and let the golden sun qi rush out. Reaching out with both hands outstretched, palms facing towards the middle, awe-inspiringly challenging his adversary to match palms, he clapped down on the green sword light.

HSSB 13: Whip Your Face Until It's Bloody!

Chao Yuanlong reached out with his hands, using his bare palms to catch the naked blade. He clapped down on the green sword-light.

Yet, to his surprise, the streak of green light suddenly erupted with countless streaks of green sword essence!

Almost as if it was a real dragon, all of the armor on his body began to rattle—just like a dragon rattling its scales!

Green dragon in the sleeve, true dragon rattles its scales!

At this moment, the green sword light resembled a flesh and blood dragon!

As the green sword essence split apart, it collided against the golden needles and broke them apart!

Chao Yuanlong was forced back a step, his expression becoming grave.

He spat out each word one by one: “YAN!” “ZHAO!” “GE!”

A shadow flashed past the eyes of the crowd, wearing a suit of white clothes and a blue changpao—this was indeed Yan Zhaoge!

The unworried countenance of Yan Zhaoge, which did not seem any different than if he was going for a leisurely walk, all of the Broad Creed Mountain disciples suddenly felt the tension in the hearts loosen as the previous suppression from Chao Yuanlong was entirely swept away. At the same time, all of the Sun Saint Clan disciples—without exception—found their hearts tightening. Even though they were used to acting with arrogance and looking down upon the world, at this moment, their haughty manner became downcast.

Without any tension or hurriedness in his voice, Yan Zhaoge walked in front of Chao Yuanlong and said, “I am here. However you want to conclude this, why don’t you say it?”

Chao Yuanlong intensely started at Yan Zhaoge and shouted in a heavy voice: “You’ve come!”

His entire body began to light up with golden light, millions of golden needles like a boundless radiance, illuminating everything in all four directions like the sun.

In the next breath, Chao Yuanlong struck out towards Yan Zhaoge with his palm.

He was a blazing sun, comparable to the celestial sun at noon!

This was different from the previous time when he was intimidating Sikong Qing, whose level he far surpassed. Chao Yuanlong, aside from using the Solar Lily technique, also forcefully exerted the might of the Heaven Striking Palm.

The combined might of these two techniques made him even more imposing than before.

Just the palm wind generated from the technique was similar to the sharp, cold aura of a blade.

Chao Yuanlong's palm attack engulfed the entire region within his vicinity, causing an enormous cloud of silt to rise up. With the force of his attack—even the dust particles became frozen in midair!

With the force of this palm attack, even sealing the circulation of air was able to be accomplished! Training the qi to be as hard as stone—his fleshly body would be capable of deforming metal like mud!

Without changing his expression, Yan Zhaoge waved his sleeve and sent an azure light flying out towards Chao Yuanlong.

The sound of the dragon once again rang out, sending azure light exploding outwards. These thousands rays of green sword-light whistled through the air, resembling the manifestation of a divine dragon.

Immediately after attacking with his sword, following the sword essence dragon, his entire person seemed to transform into an green dragon diving into the sky, breaking apart the millions of golden needles!

Dragon from an unparalleled technique, causing an apparition of a prancing dragon among the clouds!

The apparition of a dragon appearing in the clouds, rising upwards towards the heavens, would cause all the grand figures of the world to take notice!

“Bang!”

A crisp sound echoed. The golden qi and the green qi collided, and then dispersed.

Chao Yuanlong hurriedly flew backwards several steps. After steadying himself, his eyes betrayed a hint of confusion.

As he regained his wits, his expression became incomparably hideous. He fixed his gaze on Yan Zhaoge. On his face, streaks of dark red blood were clearly visible. Clearly, they were caused by Yan Zhaoge using some mysterious technique to lash Chao Yuanlong.

Yan Zhaoge clasped his hands behind his back and serenely looked at Chao Yuanlong without speaking. However, the intent was clear—“Do you still want to fight back?”

Chao Yuanlong was so angry that his spirit almost left his body and let out an angry roar. Without care for his injuries, he once more threw himself at Yan Zhaoge.

Within the murkiness of the Sealing Dragon Abyss, flashes of green light would appear, followed by the roaring sound of a dragon.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The crowd of Sacred Sun Clan disciples, witnessing the scene before them, were entirely tongue-tied. Before their very eyes, they clearly saw the vigorous Chao Yuanlong being lashed over and over again, leaving a criss-crossed pattern of bloody marks all over his face. Witnessing this sorry sight, they felt like weeping.

Chao Yuanlong was beaten until his head was spinning and his entire face was swollen, and his eyes turned blood red.

He stimulated his entire reserve of aura-qi, condensing it all in the center of his palms, and once again leapt out towards Yan Zhaoge.

At this time, he had entirely abandoned his defenses and concentrated all of his power on attacking, raising his attack power to the very peak. Even if he exhausted all his power, he wanted to return this humiliation and beat Yan Zhaoge to death!

Yan Zhaoge cast a sidelong glance at him and waved his right arm, sending a sword attack towards where his finger was pointing—straight at Chao Yuanlong's incoming palm.

An earth-shattering dragon roar boomed out, followed by a wretched shriek.

In the next moment, the spectators could see the aftermath of the clash. Chao Yuanlong had a bloody hole through the center of his palm, pierced through by Yan Zhaoge's single sword!

Yan Zhaoge unenthusiastically asked, "Are you satisfied now?"

Facing the bewildered gazes of the onlookers, Yan Zhaoge's expression once again became tranquil. Waving his sleeve, he exposed a piece of turquoise jade. Scrutinizing this scene, only now were the onlookers able to get a good look at the weapon Yan Zhaoge had been using throughout the entire fight.

Yet, this only made the onlookers draw in a breath of cold air. Chao Yuanlong, upon seeing this scene, had his eyes turn black momentarily, and almost fainted.

It did not even resemble a sword—rather, the slim and delicate piece of turquoise jade was actually a thin bamboo branch.

Yan Zhaoge grasped the branch with his right hand, while his left hand pinched the other end of the stick. Bending the branch between his fingers, he made a slight arc with the branch. This branch—it actually still had some fresh and tender bamboo leaves still attached to the top of it!

Even though they were seeing these events play out before their

very eyes, many of the onlookers could not believe what they were seeing.

Countless thoughts and justifications began rising up in their minds.

“This...what kind of fearsome artifact is this? Perhaps...it is some secret and mysterious inheritance—that must be why it resembles a regular bamboo branch!”

As soon as some people came up with these ideas, Yan Zhaoge swung his hand. The bamboo stick stuck into ground as if it was a sharp sword, and gently swayed back and forth.

Yet, after losing the reinforcement of Yan Zhaoge’s aura-qi, that bamboo stick instantly began to wither from the corrosive atmosphere in the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

“Even metal cannot bear the pressure, how could a simple plant?”

“Having the finest control, reaching the summit of precision, lifting the heavy as if it were light.” Sikong Qing’s pupils flashed with astonishment. “Before making his move, he only accumulated the minimum aura-qi, and did not use spirit qi from an artifact. Yet, wielding his qi so acutely, I thought it was a common sword... but did not think that it was actually just a bamboo stick...”

Sikong Qing attentively observed Yan Zhaoge: “He must have

broken through the bottleneck, and reaching the outer aura Martial Scholar realm—I have never heard of an inner aura Martial Scholar cultivator being able to achieve meticulous control over their aura-qi to such an extent.”

“Yet, this control; even an initial completion outer level Martial Scholar would not be able to achieve it. After all, he....”

For a moment, all of the people present felt a momentary despondence.

Even though their individual cultivation bases might not be outstanding, each and every one of them was from a renowned sect and was widely experienced. Due to this, they were all able to see the just how extraordinary that last sword strike was.

Using a piece of bamboo as a sword, yet still displaying such power—what if he had been using a real sword?

If it was a common weapon, then how would it have been like if he had used a magical treasure instead?

Even the Broad Creed Mountain disciples became silent at this point.

Chao Yuanlong stared at Yan Zhaoge, laboriously inhaling and exhaling, as the ripples of a magical treasure’s spirit qi began to undulate on his body.

Previously, he hadn't been using this magical treasure.

Yan Zhaoge still seemed to not care as he disinterestedly looked over: "So you want to compare whose weapon is better?"

Chao Yuanlong started, his face turning scarlet, but did not dare to continue activating his artifact.

Yan Zhaoge stopped, swept his sleeve, and caused the nineteen low-grade artifacts that had been lying on the ground to soar up. With the sudden activation of aura-qi, these treasures regained their spiritual link, and in an earth-shaking manner all charged straight at Chao Yuanlong.

The Broad Creed Mountain disciples let out cries of alarm, for at this moment the might displayed by these magical treasures far surpassed their original power.

Chao Yuanlong did not dare to continue stiffly resisting, and found himself forced to hurriedly retreat as he was smashed by lightning and buffeted by winds.

The crowd of Broad Creed Mountain disciples all began to laugh loudly, while the Sun Saint Clan disciples could do nothing but look on dejectedly.

The majority of these magical treasures were all protective ones—armguards, shields, armored suits—yet at this moment, they were all being used to rush Chao Yuanlong. They resembled a giant

smashing down again and again.

Yan Zhaoge finally started boxing from the sky with a magical shield. The shield bashing down broke through Chao Yuanlong's defense and smashed him on the head. This direct hit caused the Heaven's favoured son from the Sacred Sun Clan to be knocked unconscious and keel over on the ground.

After having knocked Chao Yuanlong unconscious, Yan Zhaoge carelessly moved to massage his shoulders. His gaze happened to fall on the remaining Sacred Sun Clan disciples, who immediately felt cold sweat pour down their backs.

HSSB 14: Kicking People Out Without Restraint!

Faced with Yan Zhaoge's stare, the Sacred Sun Clan disciples trembled, then quickly turned away.

“Sealing Dragon Abyss; it is inauspicious for me?” Yan Zhaoge chuckled as he stared at them.

The expression of the disciple who had previously spoken out immediately turned even uglier than if he was crying.

“Pa!” “Pa!”

The sound rang out as the two Sacred Sun Clan disciples who had previously been egging on Chao Yuanlong had their faces violently smacked.

Yan Zhaoge stood in the same place as before, revealing a new bamboo stick in his right hand. He lightly tapped on the other piece being held in his left hand.

The Sacred Sun Clan disciples huddled together and fearfully looked at Yan Zhaoge. “You...”

“Towards matters of the strong bullying the weak, I have no interest, but this bunch was truly looking for a beating.”

Yan Zhaoge lightly spoke: “As a person, I am very generous—as a general rule, I don’t hold grudges. So, if you have any more issues to bring up, I would like to resolve them now.”

“No need to stare at me so intently, I truly was going easy just now. Instead, you might want to be worried about Chao Yuanlong waking up and taking his anger out on you bunch.”

“In the future, try to think before you speak. This name of Sealing Dragon, if you insist on speaking about it, shouldn’t it be for [Chao Yuanlong](#) instead?”

TN Note: His name is lit. Chao Emperor (Yuan Long in two characters. With the second character being Long as in dragon)

“My dragon in Coiling Dragon Sleeve is only the name given to my technique, while his is actually his given name.”

The Broad Creed Mountain disciples hooted with laughter, while the Sacred Sun Clan disciples wore ugly expressions and also looked towards the two agitators with loathing. The two disciples who had just been beaten instantly turned deathly white and opened their mouths to speak, but were unable to produce any response.

Yan Zhaoge waved his palm, causing a multitude of magical artifacts to fly up and land in front of Sikong Qing, Ye Jing, and the others.

Seeing this scene, eight of the Sacred Sun Clan disciples inadvertently tightened their grips on their own low-grade

artifacts.

Yan Zhaoge unmindingly spoke: “I am not like Chao Yuanlong. These eight low-grade artifacts, I do not desire them even one bit. However, the other things...”

As he was speaking, Yan Zhaoge switched his gaze to a Sacred Sun Clan disciple, whose expression instantly turned evasive.

His countenance seemed to show an internal struggle, seemingly wanting to squeeze to death the small cat in his hands and act as a thug until the end. However, pressured by Yan Zhaoge, he ultimately did not dare to do so.

Yan Zhaoge looked at him, laughed slightly, and grabbed towards the sky with his left hand.

The Light Spirit Cat instantly escaped from the youth’s grasp. The other party suddenly felt his hand go numb and was unable to exert even a little bit of force with his fingers, rendering him unable to kill the cat.

This was done without the young Light Spirit Cat being able to detect any abnormality. It leapt into the air, after which it landed in the palm of Yan Zhaoge.

With the application of a little bit of aura-qi, the small wound on the cat’s nape quickly stopped bleeding. Yan Zhaoge gestured lightly with his sleeve, and the cat flew into the hands of his junior

apprentice-sister.

The female disciple hugged the Light Spirit Cat, feeling both affection and remorse on its behalf.

“Pa!”

Another crisp sound rang out as Yan Zhaoge sent his bamboo stick flying out towards the male disciple who had just been grabbing the Light Spirit Cat.

“That Light Spirit Cat, it is raised by my junior apprentice-sister and belongs to my Broad Creed Mountain.” Pinching the bamboo stick with his fingers, the tender bamboo shoot curved out in front of him. “This, it is something I have said.”

“Any questions?”

The Sacred Sun Clan disciples all lowered their heads, and did not utter a sound.

Yan Zhaoge unconcernedly said, “I know that you are unsatisfied that Chao Yuanlong was unable to defeat me, that all of you are unable to defeat me, that no one in the Sacred Sun Clan who not of the senior generation would be able to defeat me.”

“But—as things stand, being unsatisfied is unacceptable.”

Those proud individuals looking down on the world, shielded from trials and hardships, would usually be able to easily rise to the top. However, at this moment, this crowd of Sacred Sun Clan disciples had been thoroughly suppressed by Yan Zhaoge, and their gazes became dimmer and full of helplessness.

Yan Zhaoge pointed into the distance with his bamboo stick: “This area here can be counted as the central area, and there is no place here for you. Take Chao Yuanlong with you and beat it!”

Even though this bunch of Sacred Sun Clan disciples had their spirit and haughtiness completely broken, upon hearing Yan Zhaoge’s words they all turned to glare at him.

“This central area is so large, based on what should we have to leave?”

“Senior apprentice-brother Chao is unconscious, and if we go into an area where the murderous black qi is even denser, he might not be able to withstand it!”

“Yan Zhaoge, your Broad Creed Mountain is going a bit overboard, isn’t it? Do you really think that our Sacred Sun Clan is so easy to bully?”

Indeed, even the group of Broad Creed Mountain disciples felt that this action of Yan Zhaoge was a little bit untoward.

In the Sealing Dragon Abyss, this ominous location, places like

this central location where the flow was lessened were quite rare. This current area was extremely large, so even though the two groups of people not on good terms, if they each occupied one side of the territory, they would not even be able to see each other.

Yan Zhaoge directly beating up Chao Yuanlong, and also beating up all the Sacred Sun Clan disciples until their faces were bloodied—all of this could still be written off as the results of the younger generation exchanging pointers.

However, kicking out Chao Yuanlong and the other disciples from this area of the abyss could truly be considered to be a bit too unbridled and aggressive.

In truth, to get to the bottom of the matter, even though the Broad Creed Mountain disciples were loath to admit it, their sect was truly a bit lacking when compared to the Sacred Sun Clan, be it in terms of fame or prestige.

Yet, Yan Zhaoge acted as if nothing had happened, and continued rapping his bamboo stick against the palm of his right hand. He intently stared at the group of Sacred Sun Clan disciples in front of him, seeming to especially focus on their cheeks, and displayed an expression of ridicule on his face.

With Chao Yuanlong having fainted, out of the remaining disciples the leaders sucked in a breath of cold air and ordered the crowd: “We’ll avoid this bitterness in front of us. We’ll leave!”

Facing Sikong Qing and Ye Jing, they could let out some fierce

words, but faced against Yan Zhaoge, the whole crowd of Sacred Sun Clan disciples could only lower their heads and stay silent. Choosing a few disciples to carry Chao Yuanlong, the crowd of disciples cut a sorry figure as they headed into the distance.

But everyone present knew that the issue would not be left at that. When they returned with reinforcements, then they would stage a comeback.

Some people, upon seeing the receding figure of the Sacred Sun Clan disciples, lowered their voices and whispered: “If we had let them stay, we might be avoiding a later calamity...At least this is the Sealing Dragon Abyss....”

When other people heard these words, their blood turned cold.

Yan Zhaoge did not say a word. At this moment, Ah Hu’s large figure suddenly appeared to the side. He stuck his finger in his ear, wiggled it around a bit, then stuck it out: “Little bastard, you’re pretty fierce, huh? I’ve got my eyes on you.”

“But, my house’s Young Master, you think that he is scared of those losers going back to find reinforcements?”

That disciple cautiously refrained from saying anything.

Ah Hu at once became enthusiastic as if his mouth had lost its gatekeeper. He laughed darkly: “In fact, the actual reason is that my house’s Young Master is in a good mood today.”

“When his mood is bad, he would take it out on people instead. Probably, that little bastard Chao Yuanlong would have been buried here instead.”

The surrounding crowd wanted to laugh, but also couldn't find the courage to. Suddenly, Ah Hu heard a sound transmission from Yan Zhaoge in his ear: “Ah Hu, this month's wages—I'll be withholding them as a fine.”

Ah Hu's eyes widened: “Young master, don't!”

“It's just as you said, isn't it? When my mood isn't good, I'll take it out on other people.”

“Heavens, Young Master, you are always wise and brilliant, aloof and above mundane things, magnanimous and broad-minded, benevolent and righteous...”

Not mentioning Ah Hu's silently repeating praises, even though the Broad Creed Mountain disciples were a little concerned about the Sacred Sun Clan's inevitable backlash, they were far happier and inspired. They looked up towards Yan Zhaoge with admiration and worship mixed in their expressions.

With a wave of his fingers, he had managed to defeat Chao Yuanlong of similar cultivation, and made it seem easy.

Chao Yuanlong was not your average Martial Scholar. He was the direct disciple of the Sacred Sun Clan, an outstanding figure among his peers, an outstanding figure among all those in his

cultivation realm, who could be considered a brilliant genius of the younger generation in the Eight Extremities World.

Amongst those of the same cultivation, how many would dare to claim that they would be able to force Chao Yuanlong into such a state with such ease?

There were a couple of disciples who had entered the clan for a longer time, who, when they looked at Yan Zhaoge, felt misgivings but also intense admiration, “Before, I had never discovered that senior apprentice-brother Yan was actually strong to such an extent. Could he have been holding back before?”

“Sigh... I must preserve my image of having an expert’s demeanor!” Yan Zhaoge silently admonished himself in his heart, while he also couldn’t help but feel satisfied when looking at everyone’s worshipping gazes.

Though the Coiling Dragon Sleeve was the consummate skill of the body’s original owner, but after being improved by Yan Zhaoge, it had transformed into an even more powerful form. Naturally, in such a setting it was unable to display its full power.

In the previous generation’s Divine Palace there was a skill called the Taiji Cloud Dragon Sword, which, when combined with the Coiling Dragon Sleeve, instantly elevated it to an entirely new realm of power.

To go as far as using a bamboo stick as a sword, in such a battle, was naturally to try and look super cool. But, agreeing to

[pretentiously look cool together](#), didn't it seem like he had looked cool all by himself?

TN: ??????????- meaning “try to act cool (in a pretentious manner) in a group (in order to better look cool)”. Usually in a disparaging fashion when referring to other people, but in this case, Yan Zhaoge is trying to play himself up as a v cool dude. Creds to my roommate for teaching me

“The result isn't bad; I will keep up the good work.” Yan Zhaoge thought before nodded his head in satisfaction.

One of the disciples hesitantly asked: “Senior apprentice-brother Yan, since we are unable to totally eliminate those Sacred Sun Clan disciples, why was it necessary to leave them no face and force them away...?”

Yan Zhaoge carelessly responded: “Because my mood is good.”

The other party was entirely tongue-tied, and was left speechless for a moment.

Yan Zhaoge laughed and did not say any more. He pointed his finger and Ah Hu immediately moved the object he had brought. With much effort, he once again lifted the Internal Crystal Furnace up and placed it onto the boundary between the safe zone and the chaotic streams of black qi.

Just as Ah Hu had said, Yan Zhaoge's mood today truly was good. He landed a soft slap onto the Internal Crystal Furnace, looking forward into the deep ravine in front of him.

“I have been looking for a piece Nine Evils Converging Ground for so long, yet it turns out that it was right here this whole time.”

HSSB 15: Wearing Out Steel Shoes Searching For Something Before Finding It In Front Of You!

Immediately after stepping into the central flow region, Yan Zhaoge became aware of an abnormality.

Ye Jing, Sikong Qing, and the others stood to the side and watched Yan Zhaoge's actions with curiosity.

Yan Zhaoge waved his hands as Ah Hu pulled a small incense burner out of his bag and quickly sprang into action.

Ah Hu took off the lid of the incense burner, and quickly added in many incenses and spices of varied shapes and sizes.

From the looks of some of the materials, they were not uncommon or rare materials, while others were dark and dilapidated and looked unimpressive.

After placing all the materials into the burner, Ah Hu lit the contents and gingerly placed the lid back onto the incense burner before carefully setting the lit burner onto the ground. Very quickly, several thin streams of smoke emerged from the burner.

The Broad Creed Mountain disciples watched the scene unfold with great curiosity. Purple smoke slowly rose up into the air and spread out before dispersing into the chaotic streams of qi.

As soon as the purple smoke came in contact with the chaotic streams of baleful qi, it was as though the black qi had been agitated as its motions become even more frightening and violent.

In this central flow region of the Sealing Dragon Abyss, the density was normally much thinner when compared to other regions of the abyss.

However, at this moment the agitated black qi in this central region was surging in waves that seemed to be denser and more violent than anything the other disciples had previously witnessed.

At first, the crowd was very startled, but quickly regained their cool. They all knew that for Yan Zhaoge to take these actions, he was sure to have a plan in mind.

Indeed, even though the black mist seemed violent and ferocious, it did not try to attack any of the disciples and instead seemed to have concentrated into whirlpools.

A smiling expression could be seen on Yan Zhaoge's face at this time as he saw the whirlpools of black mist extend outwards into nine enormous rivers of black qi. In the middle of the nine enormous rivers, the faint outline of a roiling golden liquid could be seen.

The nine enormous whirlpools formed into beads, each of which was violently pulsating.

As soon as Yan Zhaoge slapped the Internal Crystal Furnace and removed its cover, the Internal Crystal Furnace instantly began to vibrate as it started to exert an incredible attractive force.

The bizarre golden liquid within the whirlpools was pulled out of the whirlpools by this force, and was quickly sucked into the body of the furnace.

All of the clan's disciples, upon witnessing this scene, felt that even though they didn't really understand what was going on, it still seemed very impressive.

Yan Zhaoge's expression at this time became very serious. Compared to when he was battling Chao Yuanlong, he was even more serious now.

Even ignoring the fact that this Internal Crystal Furnace had been created with blood and sweat, making a mistake would truly be too catastrophic.

In this area of the Sealing Dragon Abyss, if one little mistake led to the furnace exploding, it would lead to a chain explosion of all the surrounding chaotic streams of black qi. In such a scenario, none of the disciples present would have a good ending.

However, Yan Zhaoge had enacted this exact situation countless times in his mind and was immeasurably prepared for any of the multitude of issues that might arise.

The golden liquid kept pouring into the Internal Crystal Furnace with no end in sight. Gradually, it began to emit a bright light and became more and more dazzling.

The radiance poured off of the crystal furnace, to such an extent that it seemed as if even the clouds and the heavens above were being dazzled. Even the dark and clouded Sealing Dragon Abyss seemed to be illuminated.

At the side, Ah Hu immediately retrieved a long knife from his pouch and handed it over to Yan Zhaoge.

It was just a common knife, not a magical treasure of any sort. Far from even the most common treasure, it wouldn't have looked out of place in a butcher's shop. Yan Zhaoge grasped the knife in his right hand and crisply flicked the tip of it with his finger, causing a reverberating sound to ring out.

Muttering to himself, Yan Zhaoge then threw the blade into the Internal Crystal Furnace.

Upon being cast into the furnace, the blade became suspended in the middle of the furnace by some invisible force field as the luster of the blade visibly increased. Also cast into the furnace with the blade were a bunch of miscellaneous items that Ye Jing and others could only faintly distinguish. The few that they were able to recognize were all materials for crafting artifacts.

The blade was suspended in midair, while the other materials

orbited around it, causing rapid transformations.

Some of them melted into liquid, while others seemed to twist and deform. Others even shattered into pieces, while many others would spontaneously vaporize and turn into clouds of gas.

The Internal Crystal Furnace continued to become more and more dazzling, to the point where it was impossible to look at directly. At last, resplendent tongues of fire burst from the furnace and engulfed the suspended blade in a wave of flames.

Outside of the furnace, the nine enormous whirlpools continued to supply an endless stream of the golden liquid, which was greedily absorbed by the furnace.

Seeing the events unfolding in front of him, the smile on Yan Zhaoge's face became increasingly radiant.

Time slowly elapsed, but Sikong Qing and the other viewers did not feel the least bit of boredom. All of them were concentrated on the Internal Crystal Furnace. For many of the disciples present, this was their first time witnessing weapon forging firsthand, let alone with the Internal Crystal Furnace that existed only in legends.

An unknown amount of time passed, before finally the Internal Crystal Furnace let out a resounding boom and the fire suddenly dissipated.

Following this, an intense wave of spiritual qi came from the inside of the furnace, after which a clear black blade slowly rose up from within.

The blade's spiritual qi and suppressive might far surpassed that of the artifacts belonging to Ye Jing and the other disciples.

Sikong Qing gazed at the blade: "A genuine mid-grade artifact..."

The other Broad Creed Mountain disciples were also able to understand what had happened and gasped with admiration.

"How much time did this refinement take in total?" One of the disciples suddenly asked. Many of the other disciples exchanged looks of dismay as they mentally calculated the time that had elapsed, before they all breathed in a breath of cold air.

At this moment, each and everyone one of them believed that Yan Zhaoge possessed the ability to refine sixteen magical artifacts within a month's time. Even more so, within that month, it was only during times when he had free time from cultivating—so the refinement was completed during his breaks.

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, and then at the crystal furnace, the other disciples' gazes erupted with an unprecedented fervor.

"It truly is the Internal Crystal Furnace from the legends! How formidable!"

“Yan Zhaoge is modest and doesn’t speak of his achievements, yet is constantly striving towards the peak. This Internal Crystal Furnace is getting stronger and stronger, and is stepping closer and closer to the legends themselves! Earlier, it was low-grade artifacts, now it’s mid-grade artifacts, in the future high-grade artifacts—anything related to artifacts, is a possibility!”

“As long as senior apprentice-brother Yan is given sufficient time, and our Broad Creed Mountain is given enough time, how will the future turn out? What Sacred Sun Clan? In the future, our Broad Creed Mountain will stand foremost amongst the eight Sacred Grounds!”

“Even supposing senior apprentice-brother Yan’s cultivation never improves again, just this Internal Crystal Furnace is enough for him to be remembered as a pivotal figure in the history of our Broad Creed Mountain!”

“No, how could senior apprentice-brother Yan’s cultivation not progress? With his achievements in the martial dao, he was able to make the Sacred Sun Clan’s Chao Yuanlong eat dirt!”

“Trampling other-so called geniuses and monsters underfoot; senior apprentice-brother Yan can be counted as a genius among geniuses, a monster among monsters!”

Yan Zhaoge gestured with his hands, causing the pitch black blade to fly into his hands. After carefully examining it, he lightly nodded his head: “Mhm. My previous deduction was right; this trip to the Sealing Dragon Abyss was truly not wasted. The more preparations I make now, the easier it will be for me to set out in

the future.

He drew a flower with his sword strokes, causing streaks of glistening sword-qi to surge through the air, causing the onlookers to subconsciously tremble.

With a wave of his hand, Ah Hu instantly took hold of the mid-grade artifact and stowed it away in his bag.

The enormous black whirlpools suspended in midair continued to spin without any signs of stopping. The golden liquid within also continued to be sucked out into the Internal Crystal Furnace.

“Artifact forging requires one to persist for some time. All of you can explore freely,” Yan Zhaoge spoke out. The disciples inclined their heads, but the majority of them continued to gaze at the Internal Crystal Furnace, unable to avert their stares.

Yan Zhaoge did not obstruct them, continuing to monitor the Internal Crystal Furnace on one side while addressing Ah Hu on the other: “Chao Yuanlong just returned from elsewhere, and is likely to have come to complete some other task.”

“The Sacred Sun Clan must also have sent its disciples to come check on the abnormalities that have recently surface in the Sealing Dragon Abyss. Go confirm their reason for coming here.”

Ah Hu nodded his head: “Of course, Young Master.”

HSSB 16: Being Made A Scapegoat

After stepping outside of the central flow region and being stimulated by the dense streams of baleful qi outside, the unconscious Chao Yuanlong rapidly regained consciousness.

Having woken up, Chao Yuanlong's consciousness instantly began to replay his battle with Yan Zhaoge.

Within his sea of consciousness, there were still a multitude of excuses, but the reality of the situation became enormous and crashed down into his mind.

Thinking back to the time when he was exchanging blows with Yan Zhaoge, Chao Yuanlong felt like there was a fire in the pit of his stomach.

Compared to his rage back then, the puzzlement he was feeling now was even more pronounced.

Since when had Yan Zhaoge become so formidable?

Was this still the same Yan Zhaoge that he had clashed with before?

At this meeting, Yan Zhaoge also had improvements in his cultivation, which was well within Chao Yuanlong's expectations. However, the scope and breadth of this improvement had toppled over Chao Yuanlong's worldview.

Having regained his consciousness, his cheeks still burned with a fiery pain. Thinking back on the events that had just transpired, an intense sense of anger and humiliation rose up within him.

After examining the condition of his body, Chao Yuanlong became further enraged. Even with his sect being present, he had been expelled from the central flow region by Yan Zhaoge.

He fixed his gaze on the present Sacred Sun Clan disciples, and opened his mouth wanting to speak. However, it was as if the words were stuck in his chest and he was unable to utter a single sound.

The crowd of Sacred Sun Clan disciples each lowered their heads, afraid to meet the gaze of Chao Yuanlong.

Even though he had been injured by Yan Zhaoge and his palm had been pierced through, Chao Yuanlong was not someone that regular disciples like them could provoke.

Chao Yuanlong was renowned for his harsh temperament, and it was apparent that he was presently in a wrathful mood. Anyone who set him off at this time [would have to bear the consequences](#).

TL note: Lit. if you can't eat everything, you'll have to bring it home. Funny sounding Chinese idiom that basically means you'll have to bear the consequences

It's just that the fear and veneration the other disciples had for

Chao Yuanlong had now transformed to just fear without the veneration.

There were several people who, though they didn't dare to outwardly express it, actually scorned Chao Yuanlong in their hearts : "Even after being beat up by that Broad Creed Mountain's Yan Zhaoge like a bastard grandson, he still dares to posture in front of us."

"If you have skills, why don't you try to show them off in front of Yan Zhaoge's face? Truly a case of the soft fearing the hard."

"The current circumstances—aren't they simply the consequence of you not being able to beat Yan Zhaoge? If it was the other way around, we'd be the ones kicking them out of the central flow region."

Chao Yuanlong took a deep breath, willing himself to remain more level-headed.

For a split second, he really had wanted to head back and put his life on the line to fight Yan Zhaoge. After being so deeply humiliated, why didn't he perish in battle for that one last fleeting moment of joy?

However, from the results of their recent conflict, Chao Yuanlong couldn't help but become even more depressed.

That was precisely because he realized that even if he wanted to

fight a life and death battle, he might not be able to fulfill that desire. Rather, it was more likely that he would face another humiliation.

The gap between them was unexpectedly so large—if his temperament was not so tough and unyielding, he would feel hopeless.

“The task entrusted by senior apprentice-brother Xiao; we’ve spent so much time and effort to finally get some positive results. Shouldn’t we try to get that task completed first?” a Sacred Sun Clan disciple gently suggested.

The latter half of that sentence wasn’t actually what he meant—in reality he wanted to say: “Senior apprentice-brother Xiao will be arriving at the Sealing Dragon Abyss soon; at that time, we’ll go looking for that Yan Zhaoge to get revenge.”

However, in order to refrain from provoking Chao Yuanlong, he refrained from saying this sentence.

Chao Yuanlong wasn’t stupid though—how could he not understand the hidden intent behind the other’s words?

He swept his gaze over the other disciples. Even though none of them betrayed their thoughts, he could guess as to what roughly they were thinking.

After all was said and done, he had really lost horribly to Yan

Zhaoge, almost to the figurative extent of losing his underwear.

Giving a cold glance to the crowd of disciples, Chao Yuanlong refrained from saying any more than a simple agreement: “Yes. First accomplish the task.”

Having finished speaking, he departed. The other people all loosened their breath after being safely behind him.

Chao Yuanlong was expressionless, but his inner feelings were in turmoil: “Outer aura Martial Scholar! I must cultivate to the outer aura Martial Scholar realm quickly so I can begin to cultivate the special martial arts of our sect to specially suppress Yan Zhaoge’s Coiling Dragon Sleeve. At that time, even if he also breaks through the same bottleneck, it won’t matter!”

“Today’s enmity; this one will definitely repay it! If this one doesn’t make Yan Zhaoge writhe in the dirt, this one isn’t a human!”

.....

Within the central flow region, only Broad Creed Mountain disciples still remained. Some were resting while others were exploring or gathering materials from the Sealing Dragon Abyss. Some other disciples were also teasing the cute and delicate Light Spirit Cat.

The Internal Crystal Furnace rumbled as it ceaselessly continued

absorbing the golden liquid and refined itself.

Yan Zhaoge was seated cross-legged next to the Internal Crystal Furnace, eyeing it like a protective mother.

Suddenly, Ah Hu appeared with a report: “Young Master, Chao Yuanlong and that bunch seem to have come to the Sealing Dragon Abyss to seek something. It is uncertain whether they are looking for somebody or some object.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded but refrained from speaking.

Ah Hu continued: “Reporting to young master, the monastery cast out its net. That old monk and Clan Chief caught some really big fish this time.”

“Afterwards, there’s another piece of information. The surviving dregs of the Crimson Spirit Flags have arrived at the edge of the Sealing Dragon Abyss and are planning to take action against Young Master.”

Yan Zhaoge asked: “The matter of the Internal Crystal Furnace, do the Crimson Spirit Flags know about it?”

Ah Hu responded: “According to the ones who were captured, they only know that the young master has come to the Sealing Dragon Abyss to look for the seed of Li Flame True Fire.”

Yan Zhaoge paused for a moment: “The Crimson Spirit Flags is

still a fairly influential force. Man for man, it would be best to not meddle in this affair. Let us hand it over to Eastern Tang's Principal Elder to handle.

Ah Hu gave a straightforward laugh: "The Eastern Tang's Principal Elder has already made preparations. He has personally led a group of people into the Sealing Dragon Abyss. They are lying in wait for the Crimson Spirit Flags to show up and are excited for the prospect of helping you."

Yan Zhaoge laughed: "That's rubbish. Even though he's second apprentice-uncle's man, it isn't because of me. Vanquishing the last remnants of the wicked Crimson Spirit Flags would be a great contribution to the clan which would greatly raise his personal prestige. How could he not be excited?"

"In fact, if one wanted to bury me, they could push the responsibility onto the Crimson Spirit Flags. However, things are unlikely to go that far. This is definitely a scheme of my second apprentice-uncle. If the Eastern Tang's Principal Elder wants to protect me, he may not even be able to."

Yan Zhaoge shot out a supercilious glance: "Just like me and that Ye Jing, the Elder is the same. If something bad happens, even if it isn't his fault, he will end up being made into a scapegoat."

"The Crimson Spirit Flags are here for me. If I withdraw, then they will definitely withdraw as well. Though this plan has some risks, I want to take this chance to bait the rat out of its hole."

Ah Hu looked up with a gaze full of adoration: “Young Master, you truly are a young hero!”

“That’s enough, quit it with your fake expression.” Yan Zhaoge responded. Ah Hu laughed in a silly manner: “Young Master, if we succeed and get rid of the Crimson Spirit Flags, your contribution to the clan cannot be ignored.”

Yan Zhaoge waved his hands: “That is only secondary. When all is said and done, the Crimson Spirit Flags are like a hidden dagger that previously remained in hiding. Now that they’ve finally showed themselves, this is a good chance to resolve this matter entirely.”

“However, risking my personal safety is my own matter, and should not have anything to do with the other disciples. Lead them out of the Sealing Dragon Abyss.”

Notifying Ye Jing, Sikong Qing and others of equivalent status, it turned out that roughly half of the disciples were willing to stay through this danger.

Some of them hoped that by passing through this trial together with Yan Zhaoge, they would be able to develop stronger relations, while others felt that they would be able to broaden their horizons.

Ye Jing and Sikong Qing both chose to stay.

According to Yan Zhaoge’s understanding, Sikong Qing was

probably wholeheartedly devoted to the martial dao, wanting to temper herself in actual combat. As for Ye Jing, he could not fully understand his motivations.

However, their decisions were their decisions. The disciples present each made their own choices, and Yan Zhaoge did not pressure any of them for either choice. Those who wished to remain would remain, while those who chose to leave would be accompanied out by Ah Hu.

After Ah Hu and those who had chosen to leave had left, Yan Zhaoge and the others continued to remain at their original location.

An unknown amount of time passed, after which Yan Zhaoge suddenly jolted. In the distance, within the black mists, there was a barely discernible glow.

“Li Flame True Fire fire seed?” Yan Zhaoge’s eyes suddenly brightened: “The trip this time truly has had a propitious wind throughout the journey!”

HSSB 17: Don't Look For Treasure In Front Of Ye Jing

Fire appeared in the distance, in an area away from the central flow region.

Yan Zhaoge hurriedly stabilized the Internal Crystal Furnace, after which, another Broad Creed Mountain disciple spoke out: “Brother Yan, is that the seed of Li Flame True Fire that you’re looking for?”

“While you are stabilizing the Internal Crystal Furnace, we’ll help you collect it.”

Yan Zhaoge shook his head: “For you, the surroundings can be considered to be pretty dangerous. Don’t act blindly without thinking, I’ll have other people go instead.”

The youth looked around curiously, wondering at the identities of the “other people” Yan Zhaoge spoke of.

In the next moment, an enormous wind sound erupted from behind the crowd of disciples. A silhouette appeared, which rapidly made its way across the crowd of disciples and through the chaotic streams of baleful qi towards the blue flame that had appeared earlier.

The group of disciples shivered in their hearts. Up to this point, none of them had been aware of the other people following them

this whole time.

And from what they could make out of the others' movements, these were not practitioners of an ordinary background. None of them seemed to be below the Martial Scholar realm.

Moreover, these experts of the Martial Scholar realm were willing to silently follow Yan Zhaoge this whole time without appearing a single time until now, just to carry out his orders.

Unlike the blatantly visible Ah Hu, these experts were hidden in the shadows acting as an escort for Yan Zhaoge, but would not appear easily. Only under explicit instructions from Yan Zhaoge would they reveal themselves.

This scene caused all of the young disciples present to feel shocked, and as if they were dreaming.

Only now did they understand that with the imminent threat of the Crimson Spirit Flags, in these circumstances, following Yan Zhaoge into the Sealing Dragon Abyss—rather than any other Martial Scholar, was assuring their safety.

Several black shadows simultaneously pounced towards the blue flame. Chaotic streams of baleful qi billowed in the surroundings, while a phosphorescent azure nucleus of lightning hung in midair, surrounded by a shell of blue flames.

This was just the seed of Li Flame True Fire that Yan Zhaoge had

been looking for.

However, just at this moment, a torrent of crimson light emerged from the black mists. Resembling a river of blood flowing towards the sea, the red light floated in the direction of the azure fire seed.

Under the influence of the red light, the chaotic streams of baleful qi began to emit a tyrannical and brutal presence as they began to roil.

The black-clothed men who had been sent to collect the fire seed began to be forced towards the fire seed, brushing against the wall of fire.

Yan Zhaoge wrinkled his brows and slapped the Internal Crystal Furnace, temporarily halting the refinement. He flew out of the central flow region and shot towards the red glow around the blue fire.

With a flick of his sleeve, the flying Yan Zhaoge sent a green light flying out of his cuff and immediately cut off the source of the crimson light.

Flying directly towards the seed of Li Flame True Fire, Yan Zhaoge put a specially prepared glove onto his right hand and reached out to grab the fire seed.

However, the crimson glow which had been previously cut off suddenly sent out multiple sinister shadows. These shadows sped

out into the black mist and congealed the mist into an enormous corporeal body that resembled a giant demon god. Its glowing eyes revealed sentience as it reached out to grab Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge let out a chuckle, shook his right sleeve, and sent another green light towards the giant. The green light flew into the gigantic demon god formed from the black mist and directly cleaved it in two!

Following the extermination of the giant, the black mist in the surroundings began to undulate with even greater intensity than before, causing it to seem as if the very heavens were trembling. It momentarily gave the onlookers a sense of the earth shaking while the heavens spun and the earth rotated.

Once again, the initial phantoms rushed out of the crimson light, though this time they seemed to be fainter than before. They shot away from the area as they sought to escape.

The blue glow emitted from the fire fluctuated again, hanging in the air like before,

The chaotic streams of baleful qi in the Sealing Dragon Abyss seemed to become more disorderly, yet also more violent. The previously orderly central flow region seemed as if the safe region there would dissipate as well.

Yan Zhaoge wrinkled his brows and made a split decision: “Those monsters definitely are related to the transformation of the Sealing Dragon Abyss. I’ll go deal with them. All of you here should watch

the Internal Crystal Furnace and take the li true fire seed.”

“As for the other disciples, this place’s transformation is quite dangerous. Don’t wait within the periphery of the central flow region—retreat further inwards.”

Having spoken, Yan Zhaoge shot away in pursuit of the red phantoms.

Ye Jing, Sikong Qing, and the others complied with Yan Zhaoge’s instructions and retreated further back. The black-clothed men once again threw themselves at the seed of Li Flame True Fire.

The crimson glow that had previously been shattered by Yan Zhaoge was now scattered throughout the black mist. The black mist interspersed with red began to rotate around the azure fire seed.

Ye Jing was partly concentrating on retreating with the others, while also partly staring fixedly at the azure fire seed. “It truly is the Li Flame True Fire. Staying in the Dragon Sealing Abyss really was the right decision.”

“Li Flame True Fire, it contains fire elemental energy of the highest quality. What’s more, this fire seed can continuously produce True Fire—if I were to possess it, perhaps I would be able to open the ring’s next restriction even earlier.”

Though he had previously thought about obtaining the Li Flame

True Fire, he had never thought that it would be so easy to come in contact with it.

“If it falls into the hands of Yan Zhaoge, and I demand it in the sect, then it will only invite suspicion onto me and might cause the secret of the ring to be revealed.”

“If I obtain it first, I can open the restriction on the ring, and then give the fire seed to Yan Zhaoge. At that time, it will be him who owes me a favor.”

“Or, I can directly hand to a higher-up in the sect, since it directly relates to the Internal Crystal Furnace. At this time, the Internal Crystal Furnace is already known throughout the sect, and anyone who can contribute the Li Flame True Fire will have earned a great merit within the sect.”

“Why should I consider this Li Flame True Fire to already belong to Yan Zhaoge?”

“The fire seed isn’t in his possession yet. After all, the treasures of this world, regardless of their origin, are originally ownerless. If it falls into my hands, then it can be considered fate!”

“Only... how can I obtain the fire seed?”

Numerous plans flashed through his mind, when suddenly, a bright light exploded in front of Ye Jing. The blue flame was floating around, when suddenly, it appeared right in front of Ye

Jing!

Ye Jing was stupefied momentarily before he regained his senses. He clenched his teeth, then reached out and grabbed hold of the fire seed!

The surrounding people were all shocked, and were quiet for a moment.

Those black-clothed people, after getting over their initial astonishment, quickly became expressionless once again. They landed on the cliff face, and started rapidly approaching Ye Jing.

A group of Martial Scholars, together pressuring a mid qi-directing Martial Artist, just their gazes alone was almost sufficient to shatter their opponent, let alone their pressure as they strode towards Ye Jing.

Ye Jing grit his teeth and did not show the slightest cowardice or trepidation as he turned to face the incoming Martial Scholars.

Sikong Qing seemed slightly confused, as she slightly creased her brows.

The other young disciples were even more at a loss. The atmosphere seemed to become more and more oppressive, making them feel as if they would suffocate.

At this time, a greenish light flashed in the distance as the black

mist was split apart once again, revealing Yan Zhaoge...

“What’s the issue?” Yan Zhaoge asked as he landed. With a sweeping gaze, he immediately noticed the azure fire seed in Ye Jing’s possession, and couldn’t help but become momentarily dumbfounded.

At this time, Yan Zhaoge was not sure how to describe his own reaction to the events that had unfolded.

Leading the novel’s main character on a treasure hunt—that was pure idiocy. The creed of the main character rested in four main ideals—“eat everything, take everything, steal everything, and with the halo of the main character, it might also be one last kill everything...”

Like this, was it really a flood of good fortune flooding the heavens?

Your Main Character halo can really be so bright as to blind other people. Going somewhere to explore, you think that all the good stuff belongs to you?

The idea should be that when I look for treasure in front of you, it belongs to me right?

I don’t know if I should say that made emotional preparations for this a long time ago... Yan Zhaoge let his xianxia imagination run wild: “Grabbing the fire seed barehanded, without any fear of

being burned to ash, is it thanks to that ring on your finger?”

Ye Jing resolvedly kept his grip on the seed of Li Flame True Fire, while glaring at Yan Zhaoge with an unyielding expression.

Before anyone else could react, Yan Zhaoge shot a supercilious look at Ye Jing: “Here we go again, it is this state of affairs again.”

HSSB 18: You Can't Just Take Anything You Please!

Ye Jing took a deep breath, then secretly activated the ring on his finger. Immediately, the seed of Li Flame True Fire was absorbed by the ring.

Actually, every single one of his movements was grasped by Yan Zhaoge—who shook his head and prepared to say something. However, his expression suddenly changed and he raised his head to look towards the sky.

Above his head the black mist continued to roil. Suddenly, they explosively gained in violence and intensity, causing a gale to rise up. The inside of the Sealing Dragon Abyss seemed to split into pieces!

The previously calm central flow region instantly ceased to exist!

The berserk strength began to sweep everything away, as the entire world began to be covered by black mist.

Those holding firelight suddenly felt as if the sky had dropped down upon them. Buffeted by the increasingly violent chaotic streams of baleful qi, they felt as if they were bodies sundered and bones shattered.

A sound exploded out, shaking the world!

“The one surnamed Yan, you filthy animal, that disaster sown by your bastard of a father, you’ll be bearing part of the responsibility today!”

Seeing the glow of fire, Yan Zhaoge quickly reacted: “The Crimson Spirit Flags!”

This situation, after losing the Li Flame True Fire, he was still busy feeling depressed. Unexpectedly, a Martial Grandmaster had appeared with killing intent.

In the twinkling of an eye, the entire area became incredibly hot like a furnace as a heaving-shattering energy descended from above.

“Duo!” Yan Zhaoge hurriedly channeled the entirety of his power in preparation to repel the incoming attack.

The entire group of black-clothed guards exerted their life energy to draw closer to Yan Zhaoge in order to ensure his safety.

“Die!”

At this time, as the Crimson Spirit Flags’s Master cruelly shouted, the berserk fist strike from before landed. Its target was pointed directly at Ye Jing!

Directed at Ye Jing...

Directed at ... wait, what?

Hold on, isn't something wrong here?!

Yan Zhaoge, who had already adjusted his stance to receive the attack, stood there completely dumbfounded as his gaze followed the Crimson Spirit Flag Master's attack impacted, with Ye Jing directly at the epicenter of the attack, while he himself was barely on the fringe of the subsequent shockwave.

What tempo is this?!

Sikong Qing, the black-clothed guards, and all the other disciples were absolutely stupefied.

The one taken to be Ye Jing was even more at a loss.

Hadn't the opponent had just loudly proclaimed, what was it... "Surnamed Yan, you filthy animal?"

Shouldn't the attack have been aimed at Yan Zhaoge then?

Then, what is this state of affairs?

Yan Zhaoge's gaze shifted over, only to see Ye Jing grasping the seed of Li Flame True Fire, which was more vigorous than ever—bouncing around the palm of his hand as if to escape.

The surrounding wind's turbulence did nothing to hide the fire seed. Rather, it actually seemed to be resonating with the fire seed.

“He is relying on the fire seed as a target. In the Sealing Dragon Abyss, that must be the only way they were able to track us down.” Yan Zhaoge suddenly had a flash of insight: “This seed of Li Flame True Fire, I'm afraid it was first located by them, and used as bait to lure me into their trap.”

“No wonder, no wonder, they hid their presence so completely, and finally sensed that someone had absorbed some of the power of the fire seed, of course they believed that it was me. When it came to blows, his attack was truly too sudden. Even the Eastern Tang Principal Elder was not fast enough to block the attack for him.”

Yan Zhaoge turned around. His expression was slightly odd.

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master had most likely also detected the presence of the Eastern Tang's Principal Elder. In order to prevent interference, he could only make a split second decision and make his move.

Without even entering the Sealing Dragon Abyss, he directly smashed down with an enormous fist attack from outside the valley!

Yet he would never have expected that the attack meant for Yan Zhaoge was actually intercepted by someone else...

Ye Jing definitely did not foresee the turn of events that occurred. The golden goose that had dropped from the sky had suddenly transformed into an unprecedented disaster.

He obtained the fire seed, but was turned into a shield for Yan Zhaoge as a result!

“Ah!” Ye Jing found himself surrounded in the furnace center, and could only feel five senses of burning.

Compared to the previous pressure he felt when being suppressed by Chao Yuanlong, it was like the difference between the twinkling light of a firefly and the radiance of the celestial bodies. The gulf was simply enormous.

Wild waves of qi cascaded downwards, causing Sikong Qing and the other disciples in the area to also have a difficult time. Forced into continuous retreat, Sikong Qing had the presence of mind to make her way towards the outside, but her cultivation was absolutely no match even for even the slightest bit of the Crimson Spirit Flag Master’s attack. Under such intense pressure, she was entirely unable to move.

The gulf between them was simply too massive—they were unable to even offer the slightest resistance.

The level of the Crimson Spirit Flag Master was something that they simply could not even touch at the moment. Unless another Martial Grandmaster arrived, how many Martial Scholars would

be able to even challenge a Martial Grandmaster?

To even challenge the opponent face to face would be a difficult task.

To speak of the stratification of cultivation levels, Martial Grandmasters were all legendary figures.

The inner aura Martial Scholar Yan Zhaoge; even he only became the opponent of the Crimson Spirit Flag Master because of the actions of his father.

Ye Jing let out a mad scream and raised his right hand, causing the dark red ring on his finger to let out a flash of light which stopped the Crimson Spirit Flag Master's attack.

Since he was attacking from outside the Sealing Dragon Abyss, the Crimson Spirit Flag elder's attack was already weakened considerably. Even so, the remaining power was far more than enough to kill a single Ye Jing!

Yan Zhaoge saw this scene unfold, and also had some unwillingness: "Like I said, don't just take anything as you please!"

"Although you are enveloped by a Main Character halo that designates you as an ordained son of Heaven, and you can jump multiple levels to fight opponents, this level jumping still has a limit, ah. Having just departed from the village, don't think that you can skip straight to the endgame and defeat the big boss, ah."

“The level discrepancy is too much; the distance between the late qi-directing stage and the peak stage of the Body Refinement realm is far greater than the distance between the mid and late qi-directing stages, while from the peak Body Refinement stage to the Martial Scholar realm is an even greater gulf. “

“And this Crimson Spirit Flag Master is a Martial Grandmaster, meaning that he is not just around 10 levels higher, but rather a couple of tens of levels higher.”

This was already an enormous distance that couldn't even simply be described as a suppression based on levels.

It was able to be seen, that at this critical life and death juncture, Ye Jing was already forced to reveal his secret, and exploded out with his fullest force, not leaving out a single reserve of strength.

The danger of the current situation, compared to time with Chao Yuanlong, was simply too much more.

However, it was a pity that the opponent was over a kilometer away in distance, since there was no difference from if he was only a couple of centimeters away.

“Wait, let me think about it... encountering this type of situation, certain Main Characters are very difficult to kill.”

Yan Zhaoge simultaneously protected the people surrounding

him, while also moving towards the center of the gale where Ye Jing was located: “At this time, oftentimes another freakish old monster will suddenly appear for this or that or whatever reason, helping the Main Character survive this trial?”

“Sometimes it’ll be because they have prior karma, or possibly because the fox exploits the tiger, but either way, the main character will get to escape with his life.”

“Afterwards, it may even be another karmic bond that forms for the main character.”

Yan Zhaoge was in the middle of this thought, when suddenly, the deepest parts of the Sealing Dragon Abyss began to vibrate.

An extremely terrifying aura appeared from within the black mist. It seemed that this presence was even stronger than that of the Crimson Spirit Flag Master!

Yan Zhaoge gave a blank stare: “....seriously, you really do have one?”

“Who was it that ruined my happy occasion?” An irascible voice boomed from within the Sealing Dragon Abyss. Just the pressure of the voice was almost enough to cause the crowd of disciples to have their souls leave their bodies.

The Ye Jing who was already at death’s door, upon hearing this ferocious voice, was actually overjoyed at his good fortune.

Struggling, he shouted: “Big bro Han!”

“Yi, it’s my little brother Ye Jing?” the voice exclaimed loudly. “What person dares to mess with this Han’s sworn brother?”

From within the black mist, a palm reached out. Incredibly, the palm seemed to be ceaselessly enlarging as it reached outwards, until it was large enough to blot out the sky. This palm then actually reached above Ye Jing to shield him from the fiery rain!

Within the Sealing Dragon Abyss, the mountains were quaking while the rivers shook.

The other Broad Creed Mountain disciples were unable to react to all the changes that had just occurred, and were dumbstruck for a while.

Yan Zhaoge gave another supercilious look: “Oh, you two are actually sworn brothers. How did a Martial Grandmaster and a Body Refinement cultivator come to become sworn brothers? Are you like me, able to see his blinding main character halo?”

“...wait, my Internal Crystal Furnace!”

In the moment of intense peril, when he blocked the attack of the Crimson Spirit Flags Master, just the aftermath of the exchange between two Martial Grandmasters had leveled everything else to the ground.

The black mist in the Sealing Dragon Abyss surged as if it was a tidal wave. The special environment suffered such energy backlash from the fight that the spatial laws in the area were beginning to distort.

The cliff face collapsed into sheets of rock and disappeared, also causing Yan Zhaoge's Internal Crystal Furnace to meet a calamity. It fell straight down into a deep ravine!

The Crimson Spirit Flag Master, after realizing that his attack had been blocked, immediately flew into a rage. The owner of the giant hand was also someone who possessed a fiery temper. He transformed into a bolt of lightning and split apart of the sky of the Sealing Dragon Abyss as he raced towards the Crimson Spirit Flag Master with murderous intent.

At this time, another terrifying presence emerged outside of the Sealing Dragon Abyss, releasing an aura like that of the celestial galaxies overhead. This marked the arrival of the Eastern Tang Principal Elder, who had finally come.

The crowd of Broad Creed Mountain disciples was just about to heave a sigh of relief when a heaven frightening roar issued out of the nearby ravine.

“Second Elder Yan!”

“Old Monster Han, you aren't dead?”

“Elder Yan, thanks to you, I barely managed to escape nine deaths with my life! Today, you and I will have a reckoning!”

From outside the Sealing Dragon Abyss, the aura of suppression became even heavier. An heaven-shattering battle between two Martial Grandmasters erupted on the spot. The ripples of their battle affected everything in the radius of five hundred li!

The disciples in the Sealing Dragon Abyss were once again dumbfounded. Among them, no one would have guessed that the expert who had just saved Ye Jing actually turned around and started to fight with their own sect’s Eastern Tang Principal elder in a heaven-upending battle between Martial Grandmasters!

In a twist of fate, suddenly no one cared about the Crimson Spirit Flag Master...

HSSB 19: The Fallen Main Character Halo Is Quite Durable!

The one that saved Ye Jing, Old Monster Han, suddenly moved in a way that defied everyone's expectations. Without any explanation, he shot towards the Eastern Tang Principal Elder that had just arrived.

The two Martial Grandmasters that had arrived later had unexpectedly become entangled in battle with each other. The Crimson Spirit Flag Master, who had originally been the target of these two, was suddenly left completely free.

Seeing the arrival of Broad Creed Mountain's Elder Yan, even though Elder Yan was currently preoccupied, he did not plan on lingering.

The Eastern Tang region and the East Heaven region both had many experts, many of whom were flying towards the Sealing Dragon Abyss at lightning speed.

Without even entering the Sealing Dragon Abyss, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master had sent a massive fist strike flying down from a valley away. Not bothering to stay and see the result of his attack, he immediately fled.

The target of the fist strike... naturally was the one who held the Li Flame True Fire fire seed—Ye Jing...

Ye Jing almost cried.

Yan Zhaoge was unsure whether to laugh or to cry.

Everything had fallen into chaos....

Yan Zhaoge shouted: “Throw away the fire seed! He is using the fire seed to determine our location!”

Ye Jing also quickly reacted and hastily threw away the fire seed.

However, the speed of the attack from the Martial Grandmaster was too quick. This bunch of martial artists and scholars in the Sealing Dragon Abyss were too close. The attack had almost reaching Ye Jing, who was left with no way to evade.

Luckily, because Old Monster Han had previously dissipated some of the power, the cliff around Ye Jing had already been ruined to the point where it no longer looked like it could support its own weight.

The second fist from the Crimson Spirit Flag Master had not even arrived yet, but the enormous wind that preempted its arrival already caused the cliff to collapse.

Ye Jing was unable to control his own body as his figure plummeted downwards. At last, he was out of immediate danger. Even though he had suffered dire wounds from the scattered attack of the Crimson Spirit Flag Master, he at least did not perish on the

spot.

Only, in the eyes of other people, they quickly let out cries of alarm as they witnessed Ye Jing fall downwards into the darkness of the Sealing Dragon Abyss!

With the cultivation of someone like Ye Jing, he would have little chance of returning alive.

Even though he had managed to escape death at the hands of the Crimson Spirit Flag Master, Ye Jing would be hard placed to escape the same grisly outcome in the end.

A mountain road has twists and turns, but in the end, the outcome was still unable to be changed. The disciples, regardless of their previous relationship with Ye Jing, felt some grief at this time.

Of course, Yan Zhaoge knew better than that.

In fact, at this moment he had an extreme desire to yawn.

The sudden appearance of that Old Monster Han gave Yan Zhaoge ample belief that this Ye Jing was thoroughly enshrouded by the bullshit Main Character halo.

In that case, falling off a cliff—it's pretty relaxed, no?

Not only surviving the fall, if Ye Jing didn't happen upon some fortuitous encounter, that sort of basic cheat, then he would find a way to rise a couple of levels in a small realm. Upon Ye Jing's return, Yan Zhaoge would so embarrassed that it would be hard to even greet him.

Yan Zhaoge was almost dancing with joy as he saw Ye Jing freefalling into the abyss. An anomaly—this brother has already seen through your cheats!

Yet, just at this time, the black mist covering the deeper parts of the abyss suddenly erupted with extreme splendor.

Streams of brilliant light interwove with the black mist, releasing a heaving-shaking explosion. An enormous tide erupted outwards.

“That is... my Internal Crystal Furnace. Earlier, it fell into the abyss... and it exploded?”, Yan Zhaoge muttered in a daze.

In an instant, the enormous tide caused by the explosion of the crystal furnace met the freefalling Ye Jing in midair and lifted him upwards!

Under the berserk energy of the tidal wave, Ye Jing, who was already seriously hurt and was riddled with wounds, had his body terrifically smashed!

Observing this sight, Yan Zhaoge also felt a faint despondency: “... Is this life of yours lucky or unlucky?”

Ye Jing's eyes were wide open, yet he could only look on in horror as his own body shattered. His body already had lost all sensation, and he could not even feel pain from the intense buffeting of his body.

“YAN—ZHAO—GE!!”

Seeing the explosion of the Internal Crystal Furnace, seeing himself be swallowed up by the raging current, Ye Jing let out a mad howl filled with resentment and unwillingness to concede that reverberated in the abyss.

The pale red ring on his right finger, at this moment, suddenly released an unprecedented brilliance!

For that one split second, under the reflection of that pale red ring, the violent astral qi flame tempest released by the Crimson Spirit Flag Master's previous attack seemed to lose its color, then faded away into nothingness.

Yan Zhaoge's pupils shrank. For a brief moment, under the reflection of the ring, he had been able to detect a faintly projected image around Ye Jing's body.

In that projection, he could see that blurry outlines of a world made of fire!

Under the crimson sky, lava endlessly erupted in enormous

geysers, while magma poured out of the earth. It looked as if the world itself had ended.

An enormous disaster, bringing the heavens themselves to ruin! An odor of suffering seemed to emanate from within—though all that was visible was endless lava. This was a world of molten rock, a fiery hell!

Myriad streams of liquid fire intertwined in the air, condensing into an enormous god of fire!

In the presence of this fire god, all beings would have the involuntarily urge prostrate themselves in fear and worship.

Compared to the fire god, the auras of the Eastern Tang Disciplinary Elder, Old Monster Han, and the Five Spirit Flags elder were nothing.

Even though it was only for that split second, even though it was only an illusory projection, even though it was only the remnants of its aura, it made every person feel as if they were facing an unprecedented disaster.

Many of the others had their vision obstructed by the black mist and were unable to observe what had actually happened, but they were unable to control themselves as their spirits shook uncontrollably.

Yan Zhaoge, after seeing the illusory projection, had some

guesses.

However, what was more pressing to him at this moment was Ye Jing's ultimate fate.

Ye Jing's body, under the violent swell of the eruption from the Sealing Dragon Abyss, was already thoroughly smashed to pieces, and had become a bloody mist. Apparently, his life had already come to an end.

Yet, the sudden appearance of the previous projection... was it to signal the main character plot armor once again kicking into action?

As the red light from the ring enveloped Ye Jing's shattered flesh and blood, and out of nowhere, a perfect copy of Ye Jing's body was reassembled. Though it perfectly resembled him, it had a dull gaze which made it seem entirely lifeless.

“Soul...”

Yan Zhaoge paused for a moment as he processed what was going on. As he began to understand, Ye Jing's soul seemed to be sheltered by the ring's light, and flew into the ring itself.

If the fleshly body was shattered, it could be considered to be inevitable that the person had already died. However, this ring defied all logic and was able to preserve the soul even after the body was destroyed, saving Ye Jing's chance to make a comeback.

Seeing that ring sink down within the abyss, Yan Zhaoge stroked his chin: “Ahhh, interesting.”

Even though he wasn't too sure what Ye Jing's ultimate outcome would be, he figured that there would ultimately be a good show to come after Ye Jing's miraculous return from the dead.

For example, reconstructing the body, leading to a big cultivation breakthrough... wow! Or maybe instead, having some benefit from an ill wind... a fortuitous meeting would occur, like having no body but being able to cultivate some sort of awesome skill inside the ring....

Anyways, wouldn't there always be some way?

Still, for today's developments, even Yan Zhaoge hadn't been able to imagine them happening.

Ye Jing really had been thrown around quite a bit. If one were to ask him what the meaning of it all was, he would probably have ten thousand grievances.

He was on the verge of being totally ruined.

“If the main character halo really is consumable, Ye Jing must've used up quite a lot of it today.” Saying this, Yan Zhaoge immediately started coming up with a bunch of weird and random ideas.

Ye Jing unresigned howl of resentment, on the other hand, was still echoing.

“What are you doing, shouting so loudly? It’s not like I threw away my Internal Crystal Furnace down to smash you. My heart is still hurting from losing my Internal Crystal Furnace, let alone...”

Yan Zhaoge stuck a finger in his ear, letting his smiling expression gradually turn cold: “...I didn’t respond to you, yet you still take the initiative to provoke me? In the future, if you never appeared in front of me again then I’ll leave it at that... otherwise, regarding the issue of the seed of Li Flame True Fire—we still need to settle that account. “

“Main Character halo? So what? This boss here will make your turn [from a wuxia protagonist into a existentialist novel’s protagonist](#).

TL note: This sentence is kind of hard to translate... he says he’ll make Ye Jing transform from ???? to a ?????. Even though it can be loosely translated as “genre” ie. Wuxia, it really is kind of referring to what kind of feeling the novel gives the reader. ‘shuang wen’ makes the reader feel ‘shuang’ which is basically like cool, boss. (ie. Wrecking noobs, having sex, being op, having a lot of money, etc.) while ‘nue wen’ is basically just like a story which is just the MC suffering. This concept is a little bit harder because it seems to not really appear much in English literature, but is kind of a classical Chinese concept where the main character of a work just suffers. I translated this to existentialism cause it’s kind of similar, though that’s more like life is pointless rather than MC just having a life of pure suffering.

Inside the Sealing Dragon Abyss, the tide of qi was a torrential rush. The intertwined black mist and water continued to shoot up, as a spot of blue light and a spot of white light flew up with it out of the Sealing Dragon Abyss, landing in front of Yan Zhaoge.

The seed of Li Flame True Fire was gently suspended in the air, as that spot of white light gently resumed its normal form. It turned out to actually be a small metal tablet, which landed gently among the dust and rubble on the ground.

Yan Zhaoge quietly claimed the fire seed and the metal tablet: “Even though my efforts were constantly being foiled, this can finally count as having obtained the item.”

Yan Zhaoge walked through the violent tempest, picking up the struggling Broad Creed Mountain disciples as he went.

Turning around and looking down at the abyss, Yan Zhaoge suddenly thought of something: “That’s right... wasn’t this metal plate something that belonged to Ye Jing?”

HSSB 20: The Odd Metal Tablet

Having the same fate as Ye Jing's fleshly body, Ye Jing's belongings were entirely relegated to scrap.

Even the low-grade artifacts on his body were also swallowed up into the abyss. The only things that had managed to escape destruction were the abnormal red ring, and the strange metal plate that had fallen into the hands of Yan Zhaoge.

Massaging the metal plate, Yan Zhaoge thought to himself: "This item is definitely not simple."

Also, the seed of Li Flame True Fire had finally fallen into his hands, a fact that in and of itself made the trip to the Sealing Dragon Abyss worthwhile.

While protecting the crowd of disciples and convening with his black-clothed bodyguards, Yan Zhaoge and his men faced towards the roiling Sealing Dragon Abyss and mustered all their energy to shield the cliff face.

After what seemed like an interminable wait, the violent storm of energy gradually began to die down.

The disciples who were being shielded were able to come out, involuntarily let out sighs of relief. The chaotic streams of baleful qi upending space, even though they were not in the very depths of the abyss, was still able to completely transform heaven and earth.

Yan Zhaoge spoke out: “After these unexpected events, you disciples are not suited to stay in the Sealing Dragon Abyss. This time’s mission; the part pertaining to you can be considered complete. Let us depart from this place.”

The other disciples immediately nodded their heads in affirmation.

Everything that happened before was sudden and unexpected, making most people feel like they were unable to regain their bearings. Even now, many of them felt muddleheaded from all the things that happened.

Even though within the Broad Creed Mountain there was no shortage of Martial Grandmaster level experts, this crowd of young disciples had never been so closely involved with a struggle between two Martial Grandmasters.

After experiencing an event that had expanded the scope of their worldview so much, many of them still had lingering fears.

Ye Jing’s unfortunate demise had also left a shadow of grief on the whole affair.

Yan Zhaoge cast a glance at them: “Junior apprentice-brother Ye this time unfortunately encountered a big disaster. His fate is unknown, but I have great faith that he is not someone to die prematurely. I trust that he may be able to turn this disaster into good fortune.”

On hearing these words, the others were slightly startled. They

had only seen Ye Jing fall into the abyss as a result of the Crimson Spirit Flags elder's attack, but later, were unable to see anything clearly due to the black mist and were only able to faintly hear some sounds.

Yan Zhaoge faintly nodded his head: "Speaking of brother Ye's life or death at this time is still too early."

The surrounding disciples all let out a breath of air. Though normally, most of Ye Jing's relationships with them could be said to be mediocre at most, at this time, no one held their past relationships against him.

However, that feeling of being helpless and waiting for death that they had felt before a Martial Grandmaster's attack had caused all of them to become closer in the face of the great calamity.

At this moment, almost all of them had put their trust in Yan Zhaoge. On hearing him say that Ye Jing might yet return from the dead, all of them felt relieved.

Yan Zhaoge continued: "However, when that Martial Grandmaster suddenly appeared and declared himself to be sworn brothers with junior apprentice-brother Ye, it was quite unanticipated."

The crowd of disciples took this moment to think back on the matter. Examining their memories, they too felt that this matter was almost inconceivable.

Sikong Qing's gaze wavered slightly for an instant, but it was instantly caught by Yan Zhaoge: "Junior apprentice-sister Sikong seems to know something?"

"That person, surnamed Han, has a grievance with the Eastern Tang Principal Elder Yan. His temper is irascible and violent, while his martial skills seem to be demonic and tyrannical in nature. That Martial Grandmaster, if I haven't remembered incorrectly, should be the "Ghost Hatchet Elder", Han Sheng.

Yan Zhaoge spoke: "The Elder you spoke of has already been missing for many years, and also had great enmity with Elder Yan. That he would suddenly appear in the vicinity of the Eastern Tang is a matter of great import."

Sikong Qing stayed silent for a moment, then responded: "I previously came to the Eastern Tang in my travels, and visited the neighboring Sealing Dragon Abyss. While in the mountain range around the abyss, I suddenly lost consciousness."

"Afterwards, it was Ye Jing, who had yet to join the sect, who saved me. However, regarding the matter of the Ghost Hatchet Elder, I really don't know anything else."

"However, that time's foe was an expert at the boundary of the martial scholar realm. With his strength, it would have been impossible for junior apprentice-brother Ye to save me, leaving me to wonder how we escaped. I was always puzzled as to this matter, but it was difficult for me to probe further, so I just ascribed it to be the will of heaven."

Yan Zhaoge inclined his head, and did not continue his

questioning: “Junior apprentice-sister Sikong’s words; I can trust them. Seeing as you are also in the dark on this matter, then we’ll have to wait until we find junior apprentice-brother Ye until we can shed light on this issue. However, these matters will have to be accurately reported back to the sect, meaning that this issue is no longer just a private one between the two of you.”

Sikong Qing responded: “I understand.”

The party finally emerged with great difficulty from the Sealing Dragon Abyss. The young disciples, upon seeing the light of the sky again, burst into cheers.

Yan Zhaoge slapped a sound transmission tablet and rendezvoused with a middle-aged black clothed man. Together, they sent out a multitude of communications while the crowd of disciples waited at their current location.

Very quickly, Ah Hu was the first to hurry over. After him, a number of other cultivators also rushed over. Among them, there were the Broad Creed Mountain cultivators dispatched to guard the Eastern Tang, as well as member of the Eastern Tang army.

On seeing him, Ah Hu practically flung himself towards Yan Zhaoge, only stopping himself at the last moment in consideration of all the other people who were present. Instead, he hugged Yan Zhaoge’s leg while weeping bitter tears: “Ah, Young Master, it is the heavens’ joy that you are uninjured!”

Yan Zhaoge responded: “If I had a problem, then you could

follow your desires and stuff you face until bloated into a yeasty bun, and it still wouldn't concern me."

Ah Hu scratched his head and gave a foolish smile: "I wouldn't dare, wouldn't dare."

Yan Zhaoge asked: "Elder Yan, Han Sheng, and that Crimson Spirit Flag Master?"

Ah Hu straightforwardly responded: "Elder Yan and the Ghost Hatchet Elder were fighting on and off, and have headed off towards the east. The Crimson Spirit Flag Master immediately fled after making his move, but we have some people chasing after him. The most recent news from that front hasn't made its way back yet."

Yan Zhaoge nodded, waited for the other disciples to organize. Clarifying the correct path to take, they headed away from the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

The direction they were headed was towards a city called the Overlooking Abyss City. There, they planned to rest for a short while as they made arrangements for the longer journey back to the sect. The Eastern Tang was the part of the East Heaven region that was farthest east, and the Overlooking Abyss City was the easternmost frontier in the Eastern Tang.

This city was the Eastern Tang's first line of defense against the Sealing Dragon Abyss, meaning that it was very rough and unrefined.

However, because of the treasures that could be found in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, a large number of adventurous martial artists would pass through the town. As such, a portion of the business transactions would occur within the town, eventually causing a fairly large marketplace to form.

Of course, the experts that dared to enter the Sealing Dragon Abyss either possessed an unordinary cultivation base or were bloodthirsty individuals who lived by their blades. As such, the area within the city was quite disorderly.

Not only did the Eastern Tang Kingdom guard the city, Broad Creed Mountain also had a specialized garrison manning the city. These troops simultaneously protected the city from dangers originating from the abyss, while also ensuring public order within the city and protecting the earnings of the marketplace.

As the rest of the disciples settled down for the night, Yan Zhaoge was carefully examining the odd metal plate he had obtained.

From the looks of the marks on the plate, they were some sort of characters.

“For the people of this era, this can be considered to be very old and cryptic, but it is definitely something that was manufactured after the Great Calamity had already occurred.” Yan Zhaoge lightly furrowed his brows: “This language should have originated not too long after the Great Calamity. Considering the archived knowledge reserves that I have, this is the perfect situation.”

Yan Zhaoge rolled his eyes up, only showing the whites of his eyes, and sat still in concentration.

“Nonetheless, it seems like this pattern really does resemble blood vessels...”

The small metal tile was roughly half the size of his palm. Yan Zhaoge racked his brains as he traced the underlying pattern, as he deeply pondered: “It somewhat resembles one of the languages that existed before the Great Calamity, which is easy to consult. However, it also adheres to a pattern of blood vessels.”

Gently rapping the metal tile with his hand, Yan Zhaoge slowly began to comprehend: “Numerous... Dragon...Ancient...Cold...Rebel...Scales...”

HSSB 21: The Trouble Shoved Onto His Head

“What is all this random crap? The meaning is totally unclear; is it because the metal plate is incomplete? Some words are missing; no wonder it appears so fragmented.”

Yan Zhaoge thought for a time, then started infusing his aura-qi bit by bit into the metal plate.

As he had expected, this metal plate, which looked crude on the outside, was actually made of a rather rare material. Although it was incomplete, it could actually still withstand Yan Zhaoge’s aura qi, unlike the typical metal.

“Its durability has already reached the inner aura mid-stage Martial Scholar realm. With his current cultivation base still lacking, that Ye Jing must have still been unable to unlock the mysteries within, thus deciding to leave it for a later date.”

Yan Zhaoge redoubled his efforts. Not long after, changes began showing on the metal plate.

A faint white lustre finally reappeared, causing the entire metal plate to light up.

At the same time, Yan Zhaoge could feel the surface of the metal plate getting colder and colder by the second.

At this point in time, the aura-qi surrounding his body started

circulating. Even while touching the metal plate, he was still able to feel an obvious coldness emanating from it. Its actual temperature must be very low indeed, such that the average person would be completely unable to even touch it, lest their hands freeze directly and irreparably.

“This feeling, it’s a bit similar to during the era of the Great Calamity. There was a sect then known as the Glacial Ocean Sword Sect, and this feeling is somewhat similar to a special characteristic of one of its sword forms emitted upon the successful cultivation of sword-aura, though still somewhat dissimilar,” Yan Zhaoge’s gaze flickered.

“Something seems to have been added into the mix, let’s see...in the following era, I remember the Eight Extremities World having produced a Martial Saint, whom people called the Northern Ocean’s Glacial Dragon, the Glacial Dragon Martial Saint?”

“After the Great Calamity occurred, in the Eight Extremities world, amongst those who cultivated in ice, that person should have been the strongest, with even a sacred artifact in his possession. That year, when he suddenly went missing, whether he was dead or alive a total mystery, his sacred artifact disappeared along with him.”

Stroking his lower chin, Yan Zhaoge thought, “Oh, Ye Jing, you’re good; other things notwithstanding, your luck is definitely something.”

“That dark red ring doesn’t count; who knows when he picked up such a thing like this.”

“Speaking of which, after the Great Calamity, members of the Dragon race were seldom seen in the Eight Extremities World. The attainment of the Glacial Dragon Martial Saint that year; perhaps it wasn’t merely a sword form of the Glacial Ocean Sword Sect, but had something to do with the dragons instead...”

Now, Ah Hu knocked on his door from outside the house, “Young Master, Elder Xu from the Overlooking Abyss City is here.”

Xu Chuan was Broad Creed Mountain’s acting Elder, sent by the clan to take charge of matters here in the Eastern Tang Kingdom’s Overlooking Abyss City.

Ceasing his infusion of aura qi into the metal plate, Yan Zhaoge said, “Welcome, Elder Xu.”

After Ah Hu had left, leaving only Yan Zhaoge and Xu Chuan within the hall, Xu Chuan no longer addressed the former as ‘Apprentice-nephew Yan’, instead saying, “Young Master Yan, you must have suffered this time; luckily, you emerged safely in the end.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled mildly, “Elder Xu, you are shortening my lifespan.”

This Xu Chuan was from his father’s faction. From just the form of address alone, his slickness could be seen. This was the type of person that typically acted in an ingratiating manner, to the point of not having any morals, no level that he would not stoop to.

However, his superior, the Eastern Tang Kingdom's Principal Elder Yan Xu, was from Yan Zhaoge's second senior apprentice-uncle's faction. Under his oppressive rule, though, Xu Chuan was still managing to stay afloat easily; from this, it could be seen that under his slick appearance, he too possessed some level of ability, and was not the simple kind of person who chose between factions.

The incompetent would never be able to survive in Overlooking Abyss City's complicated environment.

Yan Zhaoge asked, "How fare Crimson Spirit Flag Master and Ghost Hatchet Elder?"

Xu Chuan shook his head regretfully, "Ghost Hatchet Elder was not Elder Yan's match, and was wounded by him yet again. Still, Elder Yan was not able to capture him; he managed to escape successfully."

"Crimson Spirit Flag Master also managed to escape; those potential risks are still out at large."

Yan Zhaoge's lips twitched, "While the Eastern Tang Kingdom is situated near the very edge of the East Heaven Region, our clan has already been operating here for many years. Having let those people escape so easily, there must have been some hidden powers interfering in secret."

The Eastern Tang Kingdom was situated at the easternmost part of the East Heaven Region. Whether it was the geography or the

culture, the environment there was extremely complicated; other than the Dragon Sealing Abyss, it also bordered the Mountain Domain as well as the Fire Domain.

The Sacred Grounds in control of the two Domains were, respectively, the Infinite Boundless Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan. Over the years, their influence had gradually seeped into the Eastern Tang Kingdom, such they now held great sway there.

The competition between the Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan was intense; the two Sacred Grounds secretly clashed virtually every day in the Eastern Tang Kingdom.

Xu Chuan said, “That’s right. The greatest possibility is naturally the Sacred Sun Clan; they have been growing more and more overbearing in recent years.”

After a slight pause, Xu Chuan looked at Yan Zhaoge, “Right, I heard that Young Master Yan beat up the Sacred Sun Clan’s Chao Yuanlong in the Dragon Sealing Abyss?”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, “That indeed happened.”

“Young Master Yan won a grand victory over Chao Yuanlong, spreading the grand name of our Broad Creed Mountain far and wide; this is a cause for celebration indeed. What an admirable feat, befitting of the name of the strongest member of our clan’s young generation; a Heaven’s proud son, sure to accomplish a legendary status in the future!” Xu Chuan praised him cheesily.

If it was a clan far inferior to the Sacred Sun Clan which beat up one of its disciples, the Sacred Sun Clan would definitely not let it go so easily.

But Yan Zhaoge was similarly from a first class power, the Sacred Ground Broad Creed Mountain. Clashing with Chao Yuanlong was only a normal sparring between disciples of the younger generation.

Losing in a fight meant that one would lose face; but for finding back face, it was naturally done in the same fashion.

Thus, Yan Zhaoge having beaten Chao Yuanlong to such a state, while Xu Chuan was naturally happy, he was also worried.

Rather hesitantly, Xu Chuan said, “But I heard that afterwards, Young Master Yan also threw disciples of the Sacred Sun Clan out of the central vortex region?”

Yan Zhaoge smiled lightly, “That’s right; that piece of information is true as well.”

Looking at the slightly worried face of Xu Chuan, Yan Zhaoge waved his hand dismissively, “Be at ease, Elder Xu, this incident was related to the Internal Crystal Furnace.”

Hearing this, Xu Chuan let out a breath of relief, “That’s good to hear; otherwise, the Sacred Sun Clan would definitely react. Members of our clan would also come to question you, Young

Master Xu, on this matter.”

“Other than that, about that Ye Jing, Apprentice-Nephew Jing falling into danger; when the clan hears the news, they will probably come over to ask some questions as well. Still, I don’t think that will be much of a problem. After all, that was purely accidental; someone of the Crimson Spirit Flag Master’s status making a move is just like a natural disaster taking place.” Xu Chuan spoke on this matter relaxedly.

Yan Zhaoge raised his head to look up at the rooftop, “Some people might not think this way; on the contrary, they might have been waiting for such a chance.”

.....

Also situated in the Eastern Tang Kingdom, not far from Overlooking Abyss City, was the Spirit Wind Canyon, a canyon completely owned by Broad Creed Mountain, where a large amount of precious resources was produced.

Broad Creed Mountain’s acting Elder here was known as Wen Ningzhi. From far, he appeared to be a refined middle-aged gentleman.

He was still quite young, and had a bright future ahead of him; if no accidents happened, he still had much room for growth.

“Both parties started the argument due to the seed of Li Flame

True Fire? Before Ye Jing died, he was angrily shouting out Yan Zhaoge's name?" the edges of Wen Ningzhi's mouth curled up in amusement.

The martial practitioner who was here under his orders answered, "This subordinate got this piece of news from the mouth of a young disciple who travelled together with them; it cannot be wrong. However, they did not see the scene of Ye Jing falling into the abyss."

Wen Ningzhi laughed, "That's already enough."

One of the young disciples got into an accident with everyone watching, and that disciple also happened to be Ye Jing, who held a strong grudge against Yan Zhaoge. As the leading Martial Scholar, Yan Zhaoge was very likely to be implicated; all the trouble shoved onto his head.

The person standing beside Wen Ningzhi said in a low voice, "Still, Yan Zhaoge is Elder Yan's son, after all, as well as one of the leading members of the clan's younger generation. Without real, sufficient proof, I fear we won't be able to shake his position."

"For this kind of incident, no proof will be required. Suspicion, is already enough." Wen Ningzhi gave a leisurely smile.

That person said hesitatingly, "Yan Zhaoge's Internal Crystal Furnace has reappeared within this world, with the power of our clan possibly rising by a large extent. With such an achievement, even if he has done some wrong, I'm afraid it will still be seen as

forgivable...”

Xu Ningzhi scoffed, “Internal Crystal Furnace? Just that little brat, whose hair hasn’t even finished growing out yet?”

HSSB 22: Yan Zhaoge's Gonna Get It?

Wen Ningzhi laughed, shaking his head, “Although Yan Zhaoge does indeed possess a shocking level of potential, the him now is still far from significant.”

“What’s important, actually, is his father, Elder Yan.”

As he said this, Wen Ningzhi’s voice lowered slightly, his expression turning grave, “The competition between Elder Yan and Elder Fang has already reached a crucial stage. Any small thing that happens now also has the possibility of influencing the Clan Head, that old man’s, final decision.”

“Yan Zhaoge, is Elder Yan’s weak spot,” he continued.

Wen Ningzhi laughed coldly, “Everyone says that the situation in the Yan household follows the old saying ‘a tiger father will not birth a worthless dog of a son’, but in my opinion, it just happens to be the contrary which holds true. Elder Yan’s defeat this time will be attributed to his troublemaking son; an embankment spanning a thousand li falling to a single anthole.”

He stood up to leave, “You will come to understand this in the future: Some things, don’t actually require evidence; suspicion, is already enough to influence how one views another.”

“As for the Internal Crystal Furnace, ah, how could it be something that a little brat still reeking of his mother’s milk could somehow obtain?”

The person before him said was startled, “Elder Wen, are you saying...”

Wen Ningzhi said coolly, “It’s obviously the work of Elder Yan.”

“It’s either that for the sake of his own face, Yan Zhaoge stole the credit from his own father, or that in order to pave the path for his own son, Elder Yan deliberately gave it to him on his own accord.”

“That’s why I said; Elder Yan will sooner or later be destroyed at that brat’s hand.”

Wen Ningzhi’s expression suddenly turned ugly, “But at the expense of my own Master.”

The martial practitioner beside him lowered his head, not daring to speak a word.

As Wen Ningzhi’s most trusted subordinate, whom he shared his innermost thoughts with, he knew that back in the clan not long ago, the Elder Cui of the Assignment Hall who had been removed from his duties and even placed under a series of interrogations, was exactly Wen Ningzhi’s Master.

Although Wen Ningzhi’s cultivation had long since surpassed Elder Cui, he still held him in high esteem.

He had visited many a place, even entreating the Eastern Tang Kingdom's Principal Elder Yan Xu, yet only managed to improve Elder Cui's situation slightly.

Having surely lost his position, even whether he could extricate himself from the current situation and live out the rest of his life peacefully and without punishment, was still unknown.

On one hand was Elder Yan's trueborn son, and on the other was an average person whose latent talent had almost run dry; the pressure that could be exerted by both parties, were evidently not on the same level.

Before he had made his move on Yan Zhaoge, Elder Cui had already been mentally prepared for the negative consequences that would inevitably follow, but he had never expected that he would gain nothing out of it at all, not achieving any merit whatsoever.

The crux of this matter lay in the fact that not only had he not succeeded, his intentions may also have been seen through by Yan Zhaoge, revealing even more of his side's plans. It was equivalent to having achieved nothing and bringing detriment instead.

With that, why would the higher ups be willing to make a move to protect him?

"Sigh, Master is old in body but not old at heart. He was completely unwilling to heed my advice, being bent on taking that gamble, as he strove to improve our situation. Yet, he was outwitted by that Yan Zhaoge instead."

Feeling somewhat dispirited within his heart, Wen Ningzhi thought out loud rather resentfully, “Still, Master, the premise of your attack was right indeed. A dog cannot change its ****, that Yan Zhaoge, having been unrestrained for so long, still stepped into it eventually.

The martial practitioner beside him said in a low voice, “At the end of the day, Yan Zhaoge is still Elder Yan’s son; even if you succeed this time, you will still have to withstand Elder Yan’s flames of fury after the incident is over.”

Wen Ningzhi laughed, “When we succeed, I will naturally have people up there who’ll take care of Elder Yan for me.”

“I myself do not have any weak points that the other side can grab ahold of; for the higher-ups to protect me, is very easy.”

“Alright, let Elder Yan know of this intelligence report, and send this piece of news back to the clan as well.

“Let’s see how that brat of the Yan Family can escape from this unscathed; I’ll definitely strip off a layer of his skin this time!”

.....

After Yan Zhaoge had talked with Xu Chuan for a time, he took out an object as if nothing was out of the ordinary, placing it in front of the latter, “This Cloud-Veined Crystal; is it produced in

the Spirit Wind Canyon?”

It was a pale yellow crystalline object, with patterns on its exterior which resembled floating white clouds.

This was one of the speciality products produced in the immediate vicinity that Xu Chuan had provided him with after he had arrived at Overlooking Abyss City. When martial practitioners cultivated, they would place it by their side, as it had the effect of calming one's spirits, and could slightly increase the speed of their cultivation.

Xu Chuan nodded his head, “That's right, it is indeed produced there.”

Yan Zhaoge stroked the Cloud-Veined Crystal with his fingers, as he nodded, “Its effects are pretty good.”

Xu Chuan's expression did not change, but his heart still twitched slightly.

With Overlooking Abyss City bordering the Sealing Dragon Abyss just outside of it, the internal division of the Spirit Wind Canyon did not have to compete with anyone from the other powers. Thus, as the resources it produced were also abundant, although the Elder in charge of the place was but at the level of an acting Elder, it was still one of the best-paying positions within the Eastern Tang Kingdom.

This was unlike Overlooking Abyss City. Although the position of acting Elder there was an important one, the responsibilities it entailed were great, and one would most likely be held responsible when things went wrong.

The Acting Elder of the Spirit Wind Canyon, Wen Ningzhi, was a trusted subordinate of the Eastern Tang Kingdom's Principal Elder Yan Xu, as well as a member of Yan Zhaoge's second senior apprentice-uncle's faction.

Xu Chuan pondered as he gaze fell on the Cloud-Veined Crystal in Yan Zhaoge's hand, which he had seen a lot of before. But however he looked, he was still unable to see anything special or different about it.

"Could this little object hold some abstruse secrets within?" Xu Chuan was totally confused, "Or maybe I'm just being too sensitive, and he was just simply expressing praise for it?"

Bidding Xu Chuan goodbye, Yan Zhaoge's fingers gently tapped on the Cloud-Veined Crystal, the expression on his face looking somewhat as though he wanted to laugh, but also somewhat not.

The next day, Ah Hu reported a piece of bad news, "Young Master, yesterday, we received news from our clan in the Central Heaven Region that the Punishment Hall has dispatched the acting Elder of the East Heaven Region over to this Eastern Tang."

The person Broad Creed Mountain had sent over to take charge of its affairs in the East Heaven Region was known as the East

Elder. Under the East Elder, other than the Principal Elders and the Acting Elders, there were also the Disciplinary Elders, who, other than being managed by the East Elder, also reported directly to the clan's Punishment Hall. These Elders were in charge of supervising an entire Region and making sure that the clan's laws were followed, meting out the appropriate punishment to those who failed to keep by them.

Yan Zhaoge asked, "Do you know the reason?"

Ah Hu answered, "The Sacred Sun Clan came over to make a scene; other than that, there is also that thing with Ye Jing."

He pursed his lips, "Never would I have thought that that Ye Jing would really be so unlucky, actually dying in the Dragon Sealing Abyss. Someone must have grabbed this opportunity and blown up the issue to bring trouble to you, Young Master."

Yan Zhaoge asked unconcernedly, "To the capital of the Eastern Tang?"

"No, right here in Overlooking Abyss City. The Eastern Tang's Principal Elder Yan Xu failed to successfully eliminate the threat posed by the Ghost Hatchet Elder, and with the whereabouts of the Crimson Spirit Flag Elder still unknown, as well as the volatile situation in the Dragon Sealing Abyss, he decided to first return to Overlooking Abyss City. The Disciplinary Elder, as well as a representative from the Eastern Tang Kingdom, will also be coming."

Xu Wen stroked his lower chin, “Let’s just wait here then.”

Ah Hu also stroked his lower chin in imitation, “Young Master ah, with your background, the Punishment Hall would not be roused easily; now that the Disciplinary Elder is on the move, things aren’t looking good for you.”

Yan Zhaoge spread his hands out wide, “Senior apprentice-uncle has always snubbed me for being too unrestrained. The previous incident with the Internal Crystal Furnace had originally caused him to change his views towards me, but now that this has happened, I fear that he has grown even more disappointed instead. After all, the higher the expectations one possesses, the greater the disappointment one feels when things go awry.

“Perhaps senior apprentice-uncle will not lean towards second apprentice-uncle’s faction, but I fear that this time, he is seriously thinking of handling and regulating me strictly, lest I ‘commit a mistake while on a mission’.

Ah Hu bit down on one side of his lips, “It’s hard.”

Yan Zhaoge propped up his leg relaxedly, “Indeed, someone is going to have it hard.”

Very quickly, the rest of them, including Sikong Qing and the others, also received the news.

Having been travelling companions with Yan Zhaoge, they were

also subject to interrogation as eyewitnesses.

Having heard the news, they stared at one another, their minds going into overdrive.

As Ah Hu had said, Yan Zhaoge's situation was special, and should not get into trouble with the Punishment Hall easily. Once he did, it meant that the situation was grave, and would not be so easy to resolve.

Of the clan's younger generation, the Broad Creed Sect's Young Master Yan Zhaoge who could call the wind and summon the rain; could it be that he was really going to get it this time?

HSSB 23: Questioning Yan Zhaoge

What will come, will eventually come. Very quickly, the East Tang Kingdom's Principal Elder, as well as the Disciplinary Elder of the East Heaven Region, come from far away, arrived together at Overlooking Abyss City.

Along with the Disciplinary Elder, came the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom.

This most exalted person in the Eastern Tang Kingdom, actually also rushed over to Overlooking Abyss City.

With the incident having taken place in Eastern Tang, the Eastern Tang Kingdom naturally had to put on a show of concern towards it. But for their King, as the head of a kingdom, to actually leave his capital and set off to the borderlands of his kingdom's territory; it was still out of everyone's expectations.

Although to the outside world, the explanation was that the volatile situation within the Dragon Sealing Abyss was such that it had the possibility of putting half of the Eastern Tang's territory at risk, causing their King to have to pay a visit personally, in the eyes of Xu Chuan, Wen Ningzhi, and all those others, this head of a kingdom was, more likely than not, here for Yan Zhaoge.

The Disciplinary Elder coming here was obviously not good for Yan Zhaoge, and the Eastern Tang's Principal Elder, Yan Xu, was also a prominent member of Yan Zhaoge's second senior apprentice-uncle's faction.

With Yan Zhaoge's background placed out there for all to see, doing something like beating a confession out of him was naturally impossible, but the pressure he faced was still not small.

The King and Yan Zhaoge's father had formed close ties when they were young; he was obviously here to show his support for Yan Zhaoge this time.

In recent years, while the encroachment of the Sacred Sun Clan on the Eastern Tang Kingdom had reached a rather serious stage, Broad Creed Mountain still held the upper hand in Eastern Tang. The King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom's favouritism towards Broad Creed Mountain was the most significant reason for this.

Having learnt of his arrival, Xu Chuan did not rejoice, but rather, worried; Wen Ningzhi did not worry, but rather, rejoiced.

While the arrival of the King would indeed help Yan Zhaoge somewhat, the arrival of this bigwig in itself was a sign of how the trial Yan Zhaoge was going to face this time was really not that easy to pass. The clan's Punishment Hall had moved for real this time, such that even the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom could not sit by and watch.

Sikong Qing and the other young disciples were, perhaps, still unaware of the deeper underlying meaning behind the king's arrival, but even they could feel the suffocating atmosphere, warning of the storm that was raring to come.

Outside the Great Hall, Yan Zhaoge turned back to look at them, smiling, “They’ll be interrogating me, not you; you lot don’t have to be so nervous.”

They gave strained laughs, not speaking, till a young female disciple, hugging a small Light Spirit Cat, gathered up her courage and said, “Senior apprentice-brother Yan, I believe that nothing will happen to you.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, then turned and walked into the Great Hall.

Entering the hall, they saw that at the primary position were two people, seated side by side.

One of them was an old man who had a calm, peaceful expression on his face, yet even so naturally exuded an aura of authority. This was the Disciplinary Elder, whom Broad Creed Mountain had placed in charge of the East Heaven Region.

The other was a middle-aged man, who, though wearing ordinary bright-yellow clothes, still naturally exuded the majestic, stately aura of a king. He was the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom.

At the position below him sat an emaciated-looking elderly man, a stern expression on his face. This was the Principal Elder of Broad Creed Mountain in the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Yan Xu.

Next, sitting respectfully at the end of the line, was the original

owner of this place, Broad Creed Mountain's Acting Elder in the Eastern Tang Kingdom's Overlooking Abyss City, Xu Chuan.

Though there was currently a solemn look on his face, deep within Xu Chuan's gaze could vaguely be seen a bit of worry.

Yan Zhaoge entered the main hall, calmly paying his respects to those in sitting.

After he had done so, The King and Yan Xu, not speaking, remained seated quietly, leaving the matter of the interrogation to the East Heaven Region's Disciplinary Elder.

The Disciplinary Elder looked at Yan Zhaoge, and said peacefully, "Junior apprentice-nephew Yan's victory over Chao Yuanlong, did not disgrace the name of my Broad Creed Sect. That, when seen by itself, would be a cause for celebration."

"Yet, after that victory, you gathered the unconscious Chao Yuanlong and the other disciples of the Sacred Sun Clan, and chased them out of the Sealing Dragon Abyss's central vortex region."

"During the course of the fight, you did not simply take the victory, but instead deliberately humiliated Chao Yuanlong, disfiguring his face, afterwards whipping the other Sacred Sun Clan disciples."

"The above is the testimony of the Sacred Sun Clan; were there

any falsehoods within?”

Yan Zhaoge said mildly, “It’s basically true.”

The Disciplinary Elder asked, “What do you have to say for yourself?”

Yan Xu added, “Now, it is not just a matter of the personal duel between you and Chao Yuanlong.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled lightly, “The reason I chased them out of the central vortex region was that that particular area was especially useful to our clan. In order to keep it under wraps, I naturally could not allow those people from the Sacred Sun Clan to continue hanging around that area.”

The Disciplinary Elder shifted his gaze over, “Oh?”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, “On that spot of land, the Nine Evils had congregated. I had to perform an experiment there; in order to upgrade my Internal Crystal Furnace.”

The matter of the Internal Crystal Furnace was already known by the Eastern Tang Kingdom’s King, as one of the few outsiders not of the clan who was in the know.

The Disciplinary Elder asked, “That place no longer exists, isn’t it? Of your explanation, is there any proof?”

Yan Zhaoge replied honestly, “The Internal Crystal Furnace I brought into the Sealing Dragon Abyss with me went missing; it is true that that particular furnace is not in my possession. However, using that furnace, I produced a mid-grade artifact within a short period of time; the young disciples of the clan who were there with me all saw it, and can attest to it.”

As the one with the highest cultivation amongst the crowd of disciples, Sikong Qing was the first to be questioned.

“Senior apprentice-brother Yan’s words are all true; the other disciples and I all saw it happen.”

Yan Xu looked at Sikong Qing, “How much do you know about Internal Crystal Furnaces? Do you understand the underlying principles beneath them, thus being able to deduce the authenticity of that situation?”

Sikong Qing answered neither quickly nor slowly, “This disciple has limited understanding towards Internal Crystal Furnaces. It is true that I am unable to determine what happened at that time; all the facts which I have described have only come from what I saw with my own two eyes then.

“Whether senior apprentice-brother Yan had already prepared a mid-grade artifact beforehand and then used some sleight of hand to switch out the mortal tool for it, fooling us to get through the situation, this disciple cannot ascertain with her level of cultivation. However, that jet-black long knife was definitely a

mid-grade artifact.”

“That land where the Nine Evils have congregated can help in upgrading the Internal Crystal Furnace, this disciple cannot verify; but the Nine Evils congregating, is something that this disciple is familiar with.”

Hearing this, everyone turned to look at her. The Nine Evils congregating was not something that most people would be familiar with; on the contrary, most would never even have heard of it.

Yan Xu looked at Sikong Qing, and nodded his head slowly, as he ceased to speak.

The King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom opened his mouth for the first time, “According to what Miss Sikong has described, that place, did indeed show signs of the Nine Evils congregating.”

The Disciplinary Elder nodded, “Indeed.”

“Places where the Nine Evils have congregated do not last forever; as time passes, they have the possibility of vanishing.”

He looked towards Yan Zhaoge, “In this matter which concerned the Internal Crystal Furnace, any delays could cause the opportunity to be missed; you saw this and hurriedly exerted your authority, getting rid of the Sacred Sun Clan’s disciples. This cannot be considered a mistake.”

“If it can be determined that it could improve the Internal Crystal Furnace’s efficacy a step further, not only would you not be guilty, you would even be seen as having achieved some merits instead.”

“The Sacred Sun Clan will be handled by our clan itself; you won’t have to appear personally. But if any disciples from their younger generation show up to challenge you to a duel, you’ll have to deal with it yourself.”

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “That is only natural.”

Although the Sacred Sun Clan was slightly stronger, as a Sacred Ground on par with it, Broad Creed Mountain, even having found Yan Zhaoge guilty, would deal with his punishment internally, and stand firm against any outside forces; it would not show weakness in front of the Sacred Sun Clan.

Even if Yan Zhaoge were to be punished, in a situation like this, his punishment would not be too severe. At most, he would be lectured to, as a disciple of the clan, not go around finding trouble as and when he liked, in the process bringing meaningless, unnecessary trouble to the clan.

Yan Zhaoge knew that what came next would be the real highlight of the show.

As expected, the Disciplinary Elder changed the topic, “The matter of the Sacred Sun Clan, we’ll set aside for now. About our

clan's disciple Ye Jing who died in the Sealing Dragon Abyss; as the Martial Scholar leading the group, Junior apprentice-nephew Yan, who do you have to say?

Yan Xu continued, "Within that black fog, just what exactly did you do that caused Ye Jing to be so furious and unresigned just before his death?"

"Ye Jing, did he really die because of the Crimson Spirit Flag Master?"

HSSB 24: His Defence

Hearing Yan Xu's question, Yan Zhaoge raised his eyebrows slightly, "Who does Elder Yan think is responsible for junior apprentice-brother Ye's death then?"

Yan Xu looked coldly at Yan Zhaoge, "What sort of scenario is this; are you in a position to ask questions here?"

"What you need to do now, is answer truthfully when questioned; there is not to be a word of untruth, or any quibbling to worm your way out of the situation."

Yan Zhaoge laughed, "If I remember correctly, this is just a simple question-and-answer session, and not an interrogation. And even if it were an interrogation, it doesn't seem like it should be you, the Eastern Tang's Principal Elder, questioning me."

"If you have already decided beforehand that I am guilty, then well, where's the proof of that?"

Yan Xu remained unruffled, as he asked calmly, "That seed of Li Flame True Fire, whose hands is it in now?"

Yan Zhaoge answered smilingly, "Mine."

Yan Xu turned to look at Sikong Qing, "Right before he died, did Ye Jing say anything?"

Sikong Qing was silent for a time, before she answered honestly, “He was shouting out senior apprentice-brother Yan’s name.”

“In what manner?”

“..... Angrily, unresignedly, and...full of hate.”

The Disciplinary Elder folded his hands, as he peaceful gaze once again came to rest on Yan Zhaoge, “Junior apprentice-nephew Yan, regarding Ye Jing dying in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, as the leading Martial Scholar, what do you have to say?”

While he was simply repeating his earlier question, it was clear that his current tone was slightly more serious than the one he had used earlier.

Yan Zhaoge said, “Firstly, there’s a point that I’d like to correct. At this point, junior apprentice-brother Ye is only missing; his death has not actually been confirmed.”

The Disciplinary Elder asked without changing his expression, “Why do you say so? What exactly did happen then?”

Yan Zhaoge retrieved a document, smiling as he said, “As the Martial Scholar in charge of leading a group of fellow clan members out on a mission to temper themselves, this having happened, I’d naturally have to write an incident report on this. It’s just that right before delivering it to the clan, I received the news of your arrival. Thus, I just decided to leave it on hand, and

pass it to you here directly.”

The Disciplinary Elder fell silent momentarily, before he nodded, “Having come here this time, this old man’s original intention was also to bring your report back to the clan with me.”

He accepted the document. After having perused through it once, his gaze shook slightly, before he passed it over to Yan Xu.

Having read through it, Yan Xu frowned, “Your Internal Crystal Furnace dropped into the abyss and exploded, thus destroying Ye Jing’s physical body. Still, with a protective treasure on hand, Ye King’s soul was shielded from the blast, although his current whereabouts are unknown?”

Yan Zhaoge said, “That treasure, it was extremely extraordinary. I predict that junior apprentice-brother Ye will reappear in front of us very soon; my words will finally be proven then.”

“Of course, because of the Internal Crystal Furnace exploding, he may still be angry towards me.”

The King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom wrinkled his brows, “If what you say is true, Ye Jing should only be in the mid qi-directing stage right now? Usually, already nine in ten would die upon entering the Sealing Dragon Abyss alone, let alone someone with only his soul left intact, even falling into an abyss.”

Yan Zhaoge said unhurriedly, “That protective treasure of his;

the aura it can emanate in an instant is extremely strong, and is not to be looked down on.”

Yan Xu stared at Yan Zhaoge coldly, “Ye Jing not returning; what have you to say about that?”

The Disciplinary Elder asked instead, “The seed of Li Flame True Fire; it was struck by the huge tide in the Dragon Sealing Abyss, and dropped down in front of you on its own?”

Yan Zhaoge answered, “Precisely so.”

The three bigwigs gazed at Yan Zhaoge, not saying a word.

Yan Zhaoge said quietly, “From the start, it was only Ye Jing himself who one-sidedly thought differently of me. If he does not provoke me on his own accord, to me, he is no different than any of my other junior apprentice-brothers.”

“As for the seed of Li Flame True Fire, I believe that the clan will prioritize it for the production of Internal Crystal Furnaces; for me to get it, would be very easy.”

“Even if junior apprentice-brother Ye is still immature and lacks understanding, thus fighting over the fire seed with me, I would at most teach him a bit of a lesson, definitely not going so far as to kill him.”

“Moreover, there’s no need for me to stain my own hands; if I

wanted to, there're lots of ways I could make life difficult for him."

Yan Zhaoge said in a peaceful tone, "I wrote this in my report, and I'm sure that this was also mentioned in the information that you received earlier."

"Junior apprentice-brother Ye, was acquainted with the Ghost Hatchet Elder, Han Sheng."

The Disciplinary Elder frowned, "What does that have to do with this matter?"

Yan Xu said calmly, "There is indeed enmity between Old Monster Han and I, but that is a private affair, not affecting the clan in the slightest."

"Ye Jing being acquainted with him is not a problem; even this old man, would not bear a grudge because of such a thing."

"If Old Monster Han were willing to drop our previous grievances, and resolve the long-standing grudge between us, why not? I would be willing."

Yan Zhaoge smiled, "That's, you gained the upper hand in both of your previous exchanges; Han Sheng lost out."

But next, the smile on Yan Zhaoge's face gradually faded, "But this matter did not simply have to do with mere grudges; the Ghost Hatchet Elder Han Sheng, was related to the abnormalities within

the Sealing Dragon Abyss that we encountered there!”

The moment the words left his mouth, the entire hall was stunned.

The Disciplinary Elder, the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom and Yan Xu straightened their backs, their gazes all coming to fall on Yan Zhaoge.

“How did you come to this conclusion?”

The pressure exuded by three Martial Grandmasters caused the atmosphere in the entire Great Hall to resemble that of a furnace.

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “Those who were present can all testify; when the Ghost Hatchet Elder first appeared, he did not discover junior apprentice-brother Ye. Rather, what he first said was, Who was it who wrecked this old man’s good plans’. So now we have to think about that; the Ghost Hatchet Elder’s good plans, what sort of plans they were.”

Saying thus, Yan Zhaoge presented them with two crystals, in one of which was sealed the red light which had reappeared within the black fog that had been present in the Dragon Sealing Abyss.

Within the other crystal, though, was sealed a blurry figure, the sinister figure whom Yan Zhaoge had forsaken the seed of Li Flame True Fire to chase down at the time.

Yan Zhaoge looked straight at Yan Xu, “Elder Yan, you are the most familiar with the Ghost Hatchet Elder, from this, can you discover anything?”

Yan Xu received the crystal, scrutinising it carefully, as the gazes of the Disciplinary Elder as well as the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom also fell on him.

After a while, Yan Xu let out a long breath, before saying in a low voice, “I don’t know exactly what kind of sinister art this is...but it is indeed the handiwork of Old Monster Han.”

Yan Zhaoge serenely narrated his encounter with the sinister figure as well as the details of his pursuit, as the three Martial Grandmasters present all fell into deep thought.

What had happened inside the Sealing Dragon Abyss was not a minor thing, because it was related to the Earth Territory of days long past, what was known today as ‘Hell’!

After a long time, the Disciplinary Elder raised his head, asking, “What you’re saying is, Ye Jing was in collusion with Han Sheng?”

Yan Zhaoge shook his head, “I meant no such thing.”

“Junior apprentice-brother Ye and the Ghost Hatchet Elder were well-acquainted, to the point of even addressing each other as brothers. That is a fact.”

“How junior apprentice-brother Ye met the Ghost Hatchet Elder; how much he knew about the Dragon Sealing Abyss; how much he knew about that old man; whether he had any other intentions in joining our clan; these are all things that I am unsure of, which require verification.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “In saying all this, I am only trying to prove that if I wanted to make things difficult for junior apprentice-brother Ye, making a move on him myself would be totally unnecessary.”

The trio simultaneously fell silent.

As Yan Zhaoge had said, this sort of thing having happened, while the clan would not take extreme measures against Ye Jing, carrying out a large number of interrogations and checks against him would be unavoidable. Just this alone, would be a lot for Ye Jing to bear.

Even Yan Zhaoge’s senior apprentice-uncle would have to reconsider taking in Ye Jing as a disciple, at least before the investigation had satisfactorily concluded.

“As I’ve said, junior apprentice-brother Ye is not actually dead. That treasure of his seems somewhat unique; and may perhaps help him to reforge a new fleshly body.”

“The next time he shows up, a lot of things would be known by just simply asking him; at the time, I wouldn’t mind standing witness against him in person.”

As Yan Zhaoge said that final part, he laughed lightly, “When that happens, we can perform a Blood Soul Recollection, showing the scene of what happened at the time; neither of us could be scared of the other trying to cover up their guilt then.”

Yan Xu asked gruffly, “Still the same sentence; what if Ye Jing doesn’t show up?”

“Three years, two years...a year? Or maybe even shorter,” Yan Zhaoge said mildly, “As long as no one deliberately wants him gone from the face of this earth forever.”

Yan Xu’s face was as sunken as water.

As he reclined on his chair, the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom nodded slightly at Yan Zhaoge.

The Disciplinary Elder spoke slowly, as he considered Yan Zhaoge’s words, “I will relay the full contents of today’s questioning to our clan.”

“Personally, I believe your, junior apprentice-nephew Yan’s words, but, as you have said, it is time that will hopefully prove your innocence beyond the shadow of a doubt. If Ye Jing still lives, it would indeed be a cause for rejoice. The clan will continue searching for his whereabouts.”

At the end of the day, there was still no definite evidence which

could point at Yan Zhaoge having deliberately caused Ye Jing's death; not even convicting him of having caused it by accident was possible.

“Since we have finished discussing my matter, let's talk about something else now.”

Yan Zhaoge abruptly questioned, “The one who reported on me, sending the news back to the clan beforehand, was the Spirit Wind Canyon's Acting Elder, Wen Ningzhi, yes?”

HSSB 25: Counterattack

The clan had reacted so quickly this time, and it was such a huge reaction too. There surely must have been someone adding fuel to the fire from the side.

Outside of the Sealing Dragon Abyss, other than those from the Eastern Tang Kingdom, the only Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners they had come into contact with were those from Overlooking Abyss City, as well as those from the Spirit Wind Canyon.

Between Xu Chuan and Wen Ningzhi, the latter was obviously more suspicious.

Over the past few days, Yan Zhaoge had also sent Ah Hu to do a check on Wen Ningzhi. The relationship between him and the former elder of the Assignment Hall, Elder Cui, was naturally revealed.

Yan Xu glanced at Yan Zhaoge indifferently, “Wen Ningzhi reported it to me, and I reported it to the clan in turn. As the Principal Elder of the land of the Eastern Tang, as well as the superior of the Acting Elder of the Spirit Wind Canyon, with this kind of thing happening in the territory of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, I naturally reported it to the clan; do you have a problem with that?”

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “Oh, the problem’s not big; it’s just that I suspect Wen Ningzhi of having betrayed the clan, and colluded

with some outside enemies.”

“Therefore, for this time’s incident, I couldn’t help but relate it to him; perhaps him telling on me to the clan might not only have merely been because of the clan’s internal problems.”

“After all, Elder Yan Xu, as you also know, in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, I just beat up the disciple of some particular clan and left him half-dead.”

Yan Xu’s gaze abruptly turned cold, as he glared at Yan Zhaoge, “Yan Zhaoge, watch what you’re saying!”

Yan Zhaoge said calmly, “I have been watching it. That’s why I only used the word suspect; it’s just suspicion.”

The Disciplinary Elder looked first at Yan Zhaoge, then at Yan Xu.

Sighing, he first said to Sikong Qing, “Junior apprentice-niece, you may take your leave.”

Sikong Qing looked silently at Yan Zhaoge, before leaving as asked.

The Disciplinary Elder waited for her to leave before asking, “Junior apprentice-nephew, what do you mean, exactly?”

Yan Zhaoge took out an object. As he held out his palm, the gazes of the other people in the Great Hall looked towards it. What they saw was a pale yellow crystal with veins painting its exterior, their shape somewhat resembling white clouds.

Upon seeing the crystal, the eyebrows of the Acting Elder of Overlooking Abyss City, Xu Chuan, twitched involuntarily as he exclaimed, “Cloud-Veined Crystal!”

Yan Xu took a look at it, then asked, “Cloud-Veined Crystal; what have you taken this thing out for?”

Yan Zhaoge laughed, but did not speak. He took out a stalk of spirit grass, saying to Xu Chuan by the side, “I’ll be bothering Elder Xu to boil this Enchanting Spirit Grass into medicinal fluid.”

Elder Xu’s gaze flickered. The spirit grass before him was known as the Enchanting Spirit Grass. After being burned to ashes, it had the ability to guide the medicinal properties characteristic of other precious medicines along to their intended destination; when boiled till it turned into a fluid, while it was not poisonous, it was also not beneficial to the body, not serving any purpose whatsoever. What Yan Zhaoge was suggesting now would be a total waste of some perfectly good material.

Still, he did not disagree, immediately doing as Yan Zhaoge had said.

Yan Xu stared coldly at Yan Zhaoge. The Disciplinary Elder and the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom did not speak; both only

choosing to watch on silently by the sidelines.

The medicinal fluid was ready in a flash. Yan Zhaoge smiled lightly as he held out the Cloud-Veined Crystal, beginning to infuse it with his aura qi.

The Disciplinary Elder frowned, “Junior apprentice-nephew Yan, the Cloud-Veined Crystal cannot be directly infused with a martial practitioner’s aura qi; otherwise, it will shatter and explode!”

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “Be at ease, Elder. This I know; it’s also the reason why other than being used to keep the mind active and the spirit calm, the Cloud-Veined Crystal is sometimes also used as a weapon. Still, even when it shatters and explodes, its power is still very limited.”

“But at this point in time, the Cloud-Veined Crystal within my hand, cannot explode.”

As he said this, Yan Zhaoge dipped the lower half of the Cloud-Veined Crystal in the medicinal fluid of the Enchanting Spirit Grass, its upper half still grasped firmly within his palm.

And his aura qi, was still flowing into it in a steady, uninterrupted stream.

Contrary to their expectations, the Cloud-Veined Crystal did not shatter apart, remaining stable throughout.

Xu Chuan stared closely at Yan Zhaoge's palm. He did not believe that the latter had done so much simply to prove this kind of insignificant phenomenon.

The next moment, his eyes abruptly widened.

The King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, originally reclining on the back of his chair, sat back up straight again.

The Disciplinary Elder and Yan Xu, observing Yan Zhaoge's, gaze, were also momentarily stunned.

Right in front of their eyes, the Cloud-Veined Crystal in Yan Zhaoge's hand, its exterior covered in cloudlike veins, suddenly became softer, a milky-white substance flowing out from within, interacting with the medicinal fluid of the Enchanting Spirit Grass as it eventually came to form a new mixture, that looked as though there was a layer of milk floating on its surface.

The resulting fragrance instantly overwhelmed the pungent smell of medicine as it spread to pervade the entire Great Hall.

Everyone who was present here possessed a great wealth of knowledge; even a single whiff would let them roughly understand what that milky-white substance was.

That was not a drink; nor was it a medicine. Rather, it was a precious treasure known as Jade Essence.

The uses of this expensive treasure were many; whether it was added in during the forging of artifacts or the refining of medicine, the success rate would be greatly increased, at the same time improving the quality of the final product, and reducing the original amount of materials required.

In the Eight Extremities World, the amount of Jade Essence produced was extremely limited. It was only produced in a few places within the Wind Domain as well as the Mountain Domain, but with the demand for it so shockingly great, it was almost never satisfied each year; sometimes, none would be available for sale regardless of price.

Whether it was Broad Creed Mountain or the Eastern Tang Kingdom, they had to spend a large amount of resources or money each year, just to purchase some of this Jade Essence.

Even so, it was still difficult to really get ahold of the amount of Jade Essence they desired. They had to plan and use it sparingly, not daring to be too open with it.

But looking at Yan Zhaoge's performance now, within this tiny little Cloud-Veined Crystal was actually a bit of Jade Essence, and the method of extraction was extremely simple as well.

Whether it was the Cloud-Veined Crystal or the Enchanting Spirit Grass, their prices were much lower when compared to that of Jade Essence, and their production rate was much higher as well.

How much Jade Essence did this entail?

There was more than enough of it for them to use; even putting it up for sale would definitely not be a problem!

The three Martial Grandmasters all could not sit still. They all rose from their seats, instantly going in front of Yan Zhaoge, extending their fingers to touch a little of that whitish substance.

Very quickly, they all confirmed beyond the shadow of a doubt—this was indeed that very Jade Essence.

This having happened right before their very eyes, it could not have been produced through Yan Zhaoge's trickery or sleight of hand. This was truly Jade Essence birthed from the stalk of Enchanting Spirit Grass's interaction with the Cloud-Veined Crystal.

The Disciplinary Elder took in a deep breath, then, suppressing his agitated feelings, exclaimed, "Junior apprentice-nephew Yan, you have performed a huge merit!"

"It's definitely no worse than your Internal Crystal Furnace having achieved its current state; in fact, it might even be better!"

Elder Xu's cold face had also turned much more peaceful than before; but immediately after, his expression changed.

In the next instant, Yan Zhaoge's slow, leisurely voice drifted

into his ears, “Elder overpraises me, it was only through an accidental discovery that I now know this hidden secret.”

“Still, according to my knowledge, the Spirit Wind Canyon produced a large quantity of Cloud-Veined Crystal this year, and the bulk of it seems to have been sold to the Fire Domain where the Sacred Sun Clan is located.”

Yan Xu’s expression turned dark, “This is the first time I’ve come to know of such a method. I’ve never heard of it before; it seems to have never been spread within the Eight Extremities World previously.”

“Since we have come to know of this, we will naturally have to restrict the outflow of Cloud-Veined Crystals in the future. However, about Wen Ningzhi’s previous selling of the crystals; while it is regrettable, the ignorant are not guilty. We should not blame him as a result.”

“O—” Yan Zhaoge dragged out a long cry.

“How can Elder Yan be so sure that he was, really, only ignorant?”

Yan Xu opened his mouth, wanting to say something, but stopped as he discovered that within the depths of Yan Zhaoge’s slightly playful gaze obviously resided a hint of sharp coldness.

“Was it just that he failed to be aware of the matter, or that he

deliberately hid the information rather than reporting it back to our clan, instead making some hidden dealings in the dark and colluding with the Sacred Sun Clan?”

Yan Zhaoge exercised his neck a little, revealing a mouth full of white teeth as he smiled, “This I can’t say for sure, but since Disciplinary Elder has come to Eastern Tang, and Uncle as well as you, Elder Yan, all just happen to be here today as well, meh, why not just check it out a little.”

HSSB 26: The Final Verdict

Yan Xu stared at Yan Zhaoge. Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly, quietly waiting, not saying anything else.

The Disciplinary Elder looked at the two of them, sighing, “This underlying secret is something that I too was unaware of; they were not mentioned within the clan’s precious records.”

“You may have just set a precedent, Junior apprentice-nephew Yan. No matter what, we will first have to note down your contributions with regard to this issue.”

“As for whether or not the Acting Elder of the Spirit Wind Canyon was in the know, we will summon him over later; having questioned all those of the Spirit Wind Canyon who are related to this issue, all will soon be revealed.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “This secret concerning the production of Jade Essence should still be controlled within a limited radius at the present moment; after all, obtaining Jade Essence through the method in question is actually very easy.”

“Other than the Spirit Wind Canyon, within the whole wide world, there are still other places where Cloud-Veined Crystals are produced; the rarity of these crystals is far lower than that of Jade Essence.”

“While it is true that our clan requires a large amount of Jade Essence, this object is valuable only because of its scarcity. In order

to gain the upper hand, this piece of news should still be kept under wraps for now.”

“The excavation of Cloud-Veined Crystals also has to be carried out gradually in stages, in order to avoid drawing the attention of other, possibly hostile forces. I believe that the seniors within our clan will consider the matter thoroughly; I’ll not touch on this any further.”

The Disciplinary Elder said, “Naturally.”

He glanced at Yan Xu, before saying slowly, “With the immensity of this issue, it is no longer merely a problem of the Eastern Tang; perhaps it is not even in the power of us in the East Heaven Region to do anything about it. The clan itself will be making the decision.”

Yan Xu’s expression turned grave, as he nodded, “This old man agrees.”

Yan Zhaoge continued, “It’s just that the current importance of the Spirit Wind Canyon is no longer comparable to how it was before. Before the proper procedures are passed down from the clan, stability is key. An acting Elder pending investigation remaining in charge there; is that appropriate?”

The Disciplinary Elder was momentarily silent. Yan Xu’s eyes, on the other hand, narrowed into slots, a cold light emanating from within.

“Yan Zhaoge, is this a matter you can interfere in?”

“Your credit in the matter of the Cloud-Veined Crystals is not false, but the replacement of an acting Elder as well as who is assigned to the role; is it really something you can participate in?”

“Do not forget your place from self-satisfaction!”

Yan Zhaoge said mildly, “Wen Ningzhi being your, Elder Yan’s trusted subordinate and confidante, you would naturally understand him better than I do.”

The coldness residing in Yan Xu’s gaze grew; how could he not understand the meaning behind Yan Zhaoge’s words?

Your trusted subordinate and confidante may be in collusion with enemies of the clan; well then, what about you?

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, the Disciplinary Elder sighed softly.

His was really a personality which completely did not accept losing out in a confrontation, and it was a supremely domineering one as well, looking at how he dared to stand up so strongly against even a Principal Elder.

But having come here to question Yan Zhaoge this time, they had also not possessed any hard evidence to speak of. It had merely been at the level of suspecting him. Now, even though there was no evidence to back up the suspicion that Wen Ningzhi knew about

the secret behind the Cloud-Veined Crystals, how could they not follow up on it?

Of course he knew that Yan Zhaoge was counterattacking; but who could be completely sure that Wen Ningzhi had really been in the dark regarding this matter?

While it was said that the ignorant were not guilty, just thinking about the massive amount of Cloud-Veined Crystal being let out to the outside world made the Disciplinary Elder's heart ache terribly.

As for Wen Ningzhi telling on Yan Zhaoge, that was probably due to the conflict between factions, and was also most likely related to the former's personal grudge with him over what had happened with Elder Cui.

The King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom now said regally, "While the Spirit Wind Canyon lies within Eastern Tang territory, it is still a private holding of Broad Creed Mountain. This King will not say much here, only that when the production of Jade Essence begins, please reserve some of it for my Eastern Tang. The price will definitely be by the book, and will not cause your Broad Creed Mountain to lose out."

"In recent years, the supply of Jade Essence from the Domain of Fire as well as the Domain of Wind has somewhat dwindled, resulting in a shortage. My Eastern Tang also requires some Jade Essence urgently; may Broad Creed Mountain put out a helping hand."

While he had not put up an official stance, the Spirit Wind Canyon was situated within the territory of the Eastern Tang Kingdom. Without having had to say it openly, his dissatisfaction toward Wen Ningzhi could already be expressed.

Yan Xu closed his eyes and took a deep breath, before his face regained its former calm.

He reopened his eyes, his gaze already having turned serene as he turned to look at Xu Chuan, “While I believe that Wen Ningzhi was in the dark regarding this matter, since he will have to undergo an investigation now and the situation within the Spirit Wind Canyon also needs to be quickly calmed down, it is indeed true that he is not suited to continue assuming the role of acting Elder there.”

“If I were to deploy someone from a foreign land over, they would need some time to familiarise themselves with the situation. This matter must be handled calmly and efficiently; it cannot be delayed. Xu Chuan, you are the acting Elder of Overlooking Abyss City, having had the most interactions with the Spirit Wind Canyon, as well as being familiar with its layout. I will temporarily place you in charge of the Canyon, until the clan has made an official decision on the matter.”

“Holding two positions simultaneously, the workload will be very heavy. You’ll really have to keep on your toes a little.”

Xu Chuan calmed himself down, that characteristic slickness of his that Yan Zhaoge also possessed having completely disappeared,

as, his expression solemn, he said, “As the clan decrees. I will perform to the best of my abilities, with all my might.”

Yan Xu glanced at Yan Zhaoge without speaking, then nodded toward the Disciplinary Elder and the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, “Old Monster Han being related to the sudden change in the Sealing Dragon Abyss is also a matter of the utmost significance; this old man will attempt to locate him.”

Having taken his leave of the two, Yan Xu rose and strode out of the Great Hall, not speaking any further.

The King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom also stood up, saying to the Disciplinary Elder, “The situation within the Sealing Dragon Abyss cannot be ignored; the matter of the Jade Essence can be left for later. This King will also head to the Sealing Dragon Abyss for a look. Do as you wish, Elder; if there is anything, my Eastern Tang will coordinate with you.”

The Disciplinary Elder nodded his head, “Then I’ll have to thank Your Majesty first. About the Sacred Sun Clan; our clan will communicate with them such that they will not make things difficult for you.”

Yan Zhaoge also smiled lightly, “Take care, Uncle, this Yan Zhaoge will go visit you soon.”

The King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom’s stern face revealed more than a hint of a smile, as he gently patted Yan Zhaoge’s shoulder before leaving.

The Disciplinary Elder coughed lightly, as he slowly said, “Let’s put aside the matter of Wen Ningzhi for now.”

“Junior apprentice-nephew Yan, as the leading Martial Scholar who brought along some younger disciples along to the Sealing Dragon Abyss for tempering, with a disciple having been lost, his fate unknown, you bear a certain amount of responsibility even though you did not cause the accident.”

“Having found a way to upgrade the Internal Crystal Furnace even further, that is a merit.”

“Having defeated the Sacred Sun Clan’s direct lineage disciple Chao Yuanlong in an overwhelming fashion, spreading the glorious name of our clan far and wide, a reward is also in order.”

“Discovering the secret behind the Cloud-Veined Crystal, you once again contributed greatly.”

“Merit does not affect fault; fault does not reduce merit. The clan is just regarding reward and punishment; these will both be relayed to you in the near future. However, being related to classified secrets, will not be announced officially; I’m sure you can understand the reason behind this.”

This little bit of punishment, would just be for show. They were from the clan’s rule of law, which even the Clan Chief had to abide by. Still, the punishment meted out should be a totally painless one.

And the level of the rewards, would obviously be much higher.

Yan Zhaoge naturally understood the underlying principles behind this.

He smiled, nodding his head, “I understand.”

Having left the Great Hall, Yan Zhaoge immediately saw the crowd of young disciples who had entered the Sealing Dragon Abyss along with him.

They converged on him, asking, “Senior apprentice-brother Yan, how is it, there’s no problem, right?”

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “There was never even a problem to begin with; after clearly explaining the situation to the Elders, what problem could there be?”

“Still, it’s gonna be problematic for some other people.”

That day, the acting Elder of the Spirit Wind Canyon was temporarily relieved of his duties, and also summoned for a questioning by the East Elder.

And not long after, Yan Zhaoge’s official reward was also decided upon.

HSSB 27: The Rewards

When Wen Ningzhi received the Disciplinary Elder's summons, he initially still thought that it was because of Yan Zhaoge's matter.

Arriving in Overlooking Abyss City, having found out that this was not the case and that he was actually the one being investigated, he was completely stunned.

However much he scratched at his head, he just couldn't understand what exactly he had done that would require him to be interrogated.

When he finally got to understand what the matter was all about, his mouth opened wide involuntarily as he stared blankly into thin air.

Although it was only a temporary suspension of duties, having faced this trial, Wen Ningzhi would most likely be unable to return to the Spirit Wind Canyon, even if he was cleared of all suspicion. Being deployed elsewhere as an Acting Elder was already the best case scenario for him.

If Yan Zhaoge's second apprentice-uncle's faction wanted to continue competing for the position of the Spirit Wind Canyon's Acting Elder, they would have to find someone else. And because of Wen Ningzhi's earlier failure, they had lost the prerogative; it would therefore be hard for them to compete with Yan Zhaoge's side.

While he was still trusted on his side, he would have to inevitably suffer the fate of being tagged with the ‘incompetent’ label.

Originally, everything had been smooth-sailing for Wen Ningzhi. Now, his obvious rise to power had been halted, and his future prospects immediately turned incomparably dark.

“Yan! Zhao! Ge!”

Wen Ningzhi wanted to roar, but, opening his mouth, just couldn’t get his voice out of his throat. Instead, his throat contracted as he felt as though a mouthful of old blood was going to spurt out at any moment.

.....

“Young Master, within a short period of time, you have already pushed those Elders of the Assignment Hall off their seats.”

Hearing Ah Hu’s words, Yan Zhaoge shrugged his shoulders, saying nonchalantly, “I guess second apprentice-uncle’s faction will soon start to treat me as a real threat, and not think of me as a little kid anymore.”

“That’s good, but also bad at the same time. Falling on second apprentice-uncle’s radar would naturally be undesirable. Still, it’s good that some of those nasty people who want to make a move against me will probably be staying away from me in the future.”

Wen Ningzhi's fate had already been sealed; Yan Zhaoge no longer had to waste any attention on him. On the contrary, he was rather interested in this time's gains.

The punishment that had been meted out to him was twofold: First, he would be grounded for a short period of time, facing the wall to ponder on his faults. Next, he would have to take on the role of a minor frontline soldier in the investigation of the abnormalities within the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

This was nothing much to Yan Zhaoge; the number of days he would be grounded was equivalent to the number days he would spend cultivating.

As for the Sealing Dragon Abyss, he had originally intended to enter it again anyway, drawing on the chaotic streams of baleful qi within to help him cultivate the Heaven-Thwarting Mantra.

In stark contrast to the punishment he had received which did not even hurt one bit, the rewards the clan had given to him were much more generous.

Having found a way to further upgrade the Internal Crystal Furnace, he was rewarded with one of the clan's most treasured pills, the Profound Spirit Pill.

“Young Master, amongst the various pills and medicines that our Broad Creed Mountain possesses, the best one would still have to be the Heavenly Broad Creed Pill. Still, going down the list, the

Profound Spirit Pill is one of the next best things we have.”

Ah Hu chuckled, saying, “The Profound Spirit Pill is a rare and precious pill that is not easy to concoct. The number of Profound Spirit Pills available within the entire clan is therefore extremely limited.”

Yan Zhaoge laughed mildly, “The main thing is that I just so happen to need one.”

In his hands were the pill formulas for pills that were of a much higher quality than the Profound Spirit Pill. Still, concocting them would be somewhat difficult; most importantly, gathering the many ingredients which were required in order to concoct these pills would be a challenge indeed.

For the Yan Zhaoge of the present moment, the Profound Spirit Pill was already a rather nice reward, as the pill had the function of helping martial practitioners in the refining of their aura-qi.

Having reached the peak of the inner aura stage, the early outer aura stage was already beckoning to him.

In the early outer aura stage, one’s aura-qi could be released outside of the body. Having reached the mid outer aura stage, a Martial Scholar’s aura-qi would be refined to take form; it would undergo countless refinements, being suppressed to become denser and denser till it could finally take on corporeal form.

To break through from the early to mid phase of the outer aura stage, a martial practitioner had to refine the aura-qi that their body possessed; this was absolutely crucial.

Therefore, it could be said this was the pill that was the most suitable for Yan Zhaoge to consume at the current time.

In choosing the reward to be given, the clan had obviously placed all these aspects under consideration; the decision was by no means made blindly, in that sense.

Of course, increasing the purity of the aura-qi within one's body would not just be of help in breaking through from the early to mid outer aura stage; it would also benefit one's future cultivation greatly.

Ah Hu laughed with a simple look on his face, "Still, Young Master, with your level of talent, even without the help of the Profound Spirit Pill, breaking through from the mid to late outer aura stage wouldn't be an issue at all."

"If you ask me, it's still this second reward that's the best!"

Having defeated Chao Yuanlong in battle, the reward for Yan Zhaoge was that after returning to the clan, he would be allowed to enter the third level of the clan's Martial Vault once.

Within that particular building were stored the manuals of Broad Creed Mountain's various elite martial arts.

Generally speaking, those disciples who were just starting out on their cultivation were not allowed into the Martial Vault. At the very most, they would only be granted the right to enter its first level as an especially huge reward; this sort of thing only happened once in a while.

The elite disciples were freely allowed in and out of the first level. Similarly, some of them would also be granted the right to enter the second level once in a while, as an especially huge reward.

For a core, direct lineage disciple of the clan like Yan Zhaoge, they could freely enter and leave the first and second levels as they pleased. Once in a while, they would be allowed into the third level as an especially huge reward.

Although Yan Zhaoge was already familiar with the absolute best martial arts, having read up on them at the Divine Palace before the Great Calamity descended, as a disciple of Broad Creed Mountain, moreover the face of its young generation, learning Broad Creed Mountain's elite martial arts was an absolutely necessary thing.

Also, after the Great Calamity, while the various clans and Sacred Grounds had had to pick themselves up from the rubble, inheriting what their predecessors had left behind, they had also managed to think unconstrainedly as a result, leading to the birth of new theories on cultivation that differed somewhat from those of the past.

Yan Zhaoge wanted to compare the best of both the past and the present, before combining them into a more refined, perfected whole. That way, his research into the precious scriptures that the Divine Palace had possessed would also be put to as good a use as possible.

Only by properly comprehending the depth of both systems of cultivation, meanwhile dividing his time properly between the two, would his gains be greatest.

However, this particular reward could only be used when Yan Zhaoge had returned to the clan. It was not like the Profound Spirit Pill, which the clan's people had already delivered to Overlooking Abyss City and into Yan Zhaoge's hands.

Yan Zhaoge snapped his fingers, "Actually, the third and final reward is really the best of them all."

In discovering the Cloud-Veined Crystal's secret, gifting the clan with a way to obtain a large amount of Jade Essence, the reward was not a material thing; it was, rather, a special privilege.

While he was active within the territory of the East Heaven Region, if there was anything he wanted, he could just ask the East Elder to take care of it for him.

To others, this reward might seem a bit empty from the outside. However, Yan Zhaoge was even more overjoyed by it, liking it much more than the two previous rewards that had been given to him.

Ah Hu sniggered, “With that, whatever you wish to do in the Eastern Tang Kingdom, that old man Yan Xu will be unable to object to; you won’t have to communicate your intentions to him beforehand either.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “That’s not really the case, though. After all, he is the Principal Elder of the Eastern Tang. If he really wanted to create trouble for me, it would also not be that hard. Threatening his position won’t be as easy as it was with that old man Cui as well as that Wen Ningzhi.”

Ah Hu laughed, “That Elder Xu is a rather understanding person, huh. After we had emerged, he told me that whatever you, Young Master, want, you only need to tell him; he will give you priority of the resources stored within the vaults of the Spirit Wind Canyon as well as Overlooking Abyss City, supplying you with them when the need arises.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded. He would be remaining in the vicinity of the Sealing Dragon Abyss for quite a while; having an ally by his side would definitely make things much more convenient for him.

However, for the time being, Yan Xu won’t move against me. He will also be keeping an eye on Xu Chuan.”

Wen Ningzhi having failed in his duties, Yan Xu had been temporarily suppressed by Yan Zhaoge and the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, both of whom would definitely not approve of someone from his faction being chosen for the role of the Spirit

Wind Canyon's Acting Elder.

However, if someone from Yan Zhaoge's father's faction were to be chosen, it was probable that having settled into the position of the temporary Acting Elder there, he would be allowed to stay there permanently.

And Xu Chuan just happened to be different; while he was in the opposing faction, he had also not retired from the role of Overlooking Abyss City's Acting Elder.

Yan Xu had not deployed people from elsewhere, but had instead made Xu Chuan hold the role of acting Elder in both the Spirit Wind Canyon and Overlooking Abyss City simultaneously, just to achieve this effect of making gains whilst retreating. Because of his decision, when the time came for the clan to officially deliberate on who would be appointed to the role, his side would still stand a fighting chance.

At the same time, with the abnormalities within the Sealing Dragon Abyss as well as the changes regarding the Spirit Wind Canyon, Xu Chuan, having to assume two roles at the same time, would have his responsibilities greatly increased, the pressure on him correspondingly multiplying, and he might just mess something up as a result.

Yan Zhaoge sat himself relaxedly down on a chair, one leg propped over the other, "I'm afraid that he is waiting for just that moment, to get back the corresponding interest alongside what he feels he's owed."

HSSB 28: Six Spirits Demonic Fist, All-Round Increase In Power

Between the mountains located just outside the Sealing Dragon Abyss, within a small valley, were congregated a crowd of youngsters.

They were all garbed in white, and all their red-bordered sleeves similarly held the image of a sun.

While dressed in the same white clothes, the border on the sleeve of the leading youngster was dyed gold.

However, his most distinguishing feature would still be the multiple scars that still crisscrossed his face. While these scars were already very faint, having almost disappeared completely, this youth could still feel the same fiery pain that had originally been inflicted on him along with them.

It was especially when the gazes of the people in front of him were directed straight at these scars that Chao Yuanlong felt his already non-existent injuries flaring up even more strongly.

Behind Chao Yuanlong was a bunch of Sacred Sun Clan disciples. They all had their heads lowered, with their eyes looking down at their noses and their noses viewing their chests as they maintained their silence.

The youth who had similarly been whacked by Yan Zhaoge with

a twig, even more so, did not even dare to breath loudly, lest the sound be heard.

In front of all of them was a man in a white robe, currently looking towards them expressionlessly.

The white-robed man's actual age was not actually that high, at around twenty-five years of age. However, the large beard that he had grown out over his face caused him to look extremely wild and ferocious.

His voice was also very rough, "Have you tracked down her movements?"

Chao Yuanlong said, "Outside the Sealing Dragon Abyss, at the Luliao Mountains, she was spotted by someone."

The white-robed man nodded, as Chao Yuanlong continued, "I have just received news; junior apprentice-sister Meng has also left the clan, and is headed for this place."

"That, you don't need to care about." The white-robed man's expression didn't change, but the focus of his words abruptly changed in an instant, "All of you were beaten to this state by just a single Yan Zhaoge?"

Chao Yuanlong was silent for a moment, before he slowly said, "This time was this one's defeat; this one has nothing to say about it. This humiliation; this one will personally avenge it in the

future!”

Some of the young disciples glanced at Chao Yuanlong, before saying in a low tone, “Senior apprentice-brother Xiao, could it be that you intend to...”

The bearded man snorted, “Before that, I’ll be personally going to take a look at this Yan Zhaoge’s skills.”

He laughed mockingly, “Of the Four Young Masters of the current era, it is him of Broad Creed Mountain who’s most unworthy of the title.”

“But while not having even reached the outer aura stage, he could actually beat junior apprentice-brother Chao to such a state; I must admit that such a thing was out of my expectations.”

Chao Yuanlong’s face darkened, but he did not speak.

Meanwhile, looks of anticipation appeared on the faces of the other Sacred Sun Clan disciples, “Senior apprentice-brother Xiao, you plan to fight him personally?”

The person in question was called Xiao Shen. Being older than Chao Yuanlong, he had naturally cultivated for a longer time than him. At the present moment, his cultivation was also much higher than that of Chao Yuanlong; he was a Martial Scholar of the late outer aura stage.

Like Chao Yuanlong, he was one of the most prominent figures within the Sacred Sun Clan; they were undefeated amongst those of the same generation as well as those in the same cultivation stage.

The difference was that although Chao Yuanlong was a genius, he had no background to speak of. It was only that his potential had been recognised by some members of the senior generation, who had therefore put in effort in grooming him.

Xiao Shen was similar to Yan Zhaoge, in that his grandfather was a Grand Elder of the Sacred Sun Clan, and a renowned peak-stage Martial Grandmaster within the Eight Extremities World.

The four who had been acclaimed as the Four Young Masters, other than being extremely talented in the area of cultivation, all possessed extraordinary backgrounds.

The son of the Sacred Sun Clan's Chief, also known as the Radiant Prince, stood side by side along with Broad Creed Mountain's Yan Zhaoge as one of the era's four Young Masters.

Due to him being in the same clan as the Radiant Prince, Xiao Shen had not been placed within the ranks of the Four Young Masters; this had actually been one of Xiao Shen's greatest sources of lament all along.

Thus, he usually saw Yan Zhaoge, the youngest of the Four Young Masters, as a thorn in his flesh.

However, due to his age and the long time he had already spent cultivating, as well as the fact that Yan Zhaoge's nemesis had always been Chao Yuanlong, he had so far been unable to find a good reason to make his move, considering his current cultivation realm.

“The so-called Broad Creed Young Master; I've always treated him as a joke.”

Xiao Shen laughed coldly, “Now, it looks like I have underestimated him?”

“All of you are to continue the search; if reliable results are obtained, I will definitely give you no less than what I have promised.”

“I'll be heading to Overlooking Abyss City for a showdown; Hah, how much is that Yan Zhaoge really worth?”

.....

In the days following the investigation, Yan Zhaoge remained within Overlooking Abyss City. Every once in a while, he would enter the Sealing Dragon Abyss, drawing on the chaotic streams of baleful qi within to polish his aura-qi and work on his cultivation.

When within Overlooking Abyss City, he also did not slack off, continuing to cultivate diligently.

Within an enclosed room, Yan Zhaoge was seated on the floor. Adopting a stance with his fist, his entire aura changed in an instant!

The pose looked a little comical, making him resemble a giant ape. However, Yan Zhaoge's entire body actually began emitting a ferocious, bloodthirsty feel, as his muscles bulged one by one, the blood vessels beneath them jumping up and down non-stop, resembling a suppressed, furious dragon thrashing about in unabated fury.

Instantly, his entire person resembled a primordial demonic ape, aggressive beyond compare.

Yan Zhaoge nodded satisfactorily, "The Six Spirits Demonic Fist is indeed a good martial art."

The Six Spirits Demonic Fist was one of the top-tier martial arts kept by the Divine Palace in the era before the Great Calamity. It had originated from observing six different formidable demonic beasts, and slowly transformed into a secret martial art on the demonic side.

It contained six different paths of fist techniques; any single one of these alone, would already be considered an excellent martial art.

Although Yan Zhaoge's body was currently already in the Martial Scholar realm, having successfully converted his inner qi into aura form and attained a cultivation of the late inner aura stage, as he

saw it, it had not been developed very well during the initial Body Refinement stage. There was still much room for improvement.

Thus, he had specially chosen the Six Spirits Demonic Fist, to resume the training of his fleshly body.

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Ever since having crossed worlds for the second time and become the new owner of his current body, Yan Zhaoge had always been cultivating like this.

That the Chao Yuanlong who had always been on equal terms with this body's original owner now got beaten like a dead dog by the current Yan Zhaoge was not because he was too incompetent, but was because Yan Zhaoge's had experienced an all-round increase in power.

It was not only just that his sword arts had become more profound, causing him to be able to fight with opponents at a higher level. At the same time, his body's foundation had also improved tremendously.

After having finished training in the Mighty Ape Demonic Fist, Yan Zhaoge's form changed, as he adopted yet another stance with his fist.

With his low exhalation, the muscles on Yan Zhaoge's entire body began coiling and entwining. Beneath his skin, several large blood vessels tangled up, pushing on his flesh, causing his flesh which had already been quite tough originally to grow even

stronger.

This was another path of the Six Spirits Demonic Fist, the Spirit Rhino Demonic Fist, originating from the great rhinoceroses that roamed the wild in the primordial era, their defensive power almost unmatched under the heavens.

After the Spirit Rhino Demonic Fist was the Ocean Stabilising Fist. Yan Zhaoge sat down on the floor in the meditative position, resembling a statue as he remained completely unmoving.

However, the floor beneath him was rumbling weirdly, as it had suddenly transformed into a water surface.

The water surface was quiet at times while rowdy at others, such that most would find it hard to scrutinize.

It was as if there was a gigantic turtle, its four pillar-like legs striding through the ocean, resembling four Heaven Stabilising Needles, keeping all the waves within a five thousand kilometre radius in check, not being able to move as they wanted.

This gigantic turtle looked as though it possessed tremendous power, yet had an extremely gentle personality, resembling a high monk sitting still in meditation, possessing extreme patience and not making waves whatsoever.

After having trained in the Ocean Stabilising Fist, Yan Zhaoge got up, his stance changing yet again.

Earlier, the Mighty Ape Demonic Fist had been unyielding and violent, resembling a raging fire and an unrestrained storm, causing the oceans to tremble and the mountains to collapse. It was a technique that followed the path of the unyielding, extreme yang.

In contrast, the fist technique that he was training in now was exquisite and agile, resembling silk being woven and the wind greeting the willows. It was a technique that followed the path of the gentle, extreme yin.

The Heavenly Snake King Fist, also one of the six techniques of the Six Spirits Martial Fist. As Yan Zhaoge made his move, his arms intertwined and twisted, falling into sync with his breathing, giving off ‘Si...si...’ sounds, resembling an intelligent snake spitting out a warning.

It was not Yan Zhaoge intentionally imitating one; the voice had come completely naturally. It was as if the room contained a large snake, incessantly letting out hissing noises.

And these hissing noises had not been induced by his aura-qi; they were purely being emitted from his body of flesh and blood.

Yan Zhaoge was currently training in fist techniques, not touching his qi whatsoever. It was a pure tempering of his fleshly body.

The various fist techniques all having been performed once, Yan

Zhaoge stopped. However, he had not stopped to rest; he was currently entering the meditative position once again.

“The Sealing Dragon Abyss has already sufficiently tempered my aura-qi; all preparations are complete. I should just take that step right here, right now.”

HSSB 29: Becoming An Outer Aura Martial Scholar!

“According to the training speed of this body’s original owner, the breakthrough from the inner aura stage to the outer aura stage would only be at the end of this year or even next year, wouldn’t it?”

Yan Zhaoge remained relaxed as the aura-qi surrounding his body began vibrating, looking as though it was trying to break out of his body.

There was a huge bottleneck between the inner and outer aura stages, that resembled an insurmountable gulf. The majority of late inner aura Martial Scholars would be stuck at this bottleneck, unable to make any progress for a long time.

The time that some people would require to break through from the late inner aura stage to the early outer aura stage would sometimes be even greater than the time they had spent breaking through from the early to mid inner aura stage and the mid to late inner aura stage combined.

But proportional to the extreme difficulty with regard to breaking through was the great leap in strength the breakthrough entailed.

To a martial practitioner like Yan Zhaoge, the breakthrough from the late inner aura stage to the early outer aura stage did not just represent a simple increase in personal strength. It also meant

that they would be able to properly wield mid-grade artifacts.

An inner aura Martial Scholar could wield low-grade artifacts with ease, but trying to use mid-grade artifacts would, for them, be like a martial practitioner in the Body Refinement realm trying to use a low-grade artifact. In both instances, they would find it hard to bring out all of the artifact's power.

Mid-grade artifacts, naturally, were something that Yan Zhaoge did not lack.

Thus, to Yan Zhaoge, breaking through to become an outer aura Martial Scholar was not just a matter of his personal strength increasing. With the added power from the wielding of artifacts, his overall combat strength would also rise greatly.

It had already been quite some time since his second crossing of worlds, yet Yan Zhaoge had always remained at the inner aura Martial Scholar stage.

It was not that he could not make the breakthrough successfully; to Yan Zhaoge, the bottlenecks and other difficult trials that the previous owner of his current body had faced were all resolvable. And he did not only have a single solution on hand for this; if he so desired, it would be possible to make the breakthrough anytime.

However, Yan Zhaoge had still retained his patience, earnestly sorting through the various precious secret manuals that were stored within his brain and then corroborating theory with reality, all for attaining that most perfect method for progressing, at the

same time paving the way for his future cultivation path as best as he could.

Now that all the preparations were basically complete, there was naturally no longer a need to wait.

Whenever he wanted to make the breakthrough, he would make the breakthrough; it all depended on his mood.

As Yan Zhaoge sat quietly on the floor, the air within the entire room felt as though it had completely solidified; the dust on the floor seemed like they were being suppressed by an invisible pressure, which completely prevented them from even floating up even a tiny bit.

The many orifices all around his body currently seemed like they had a life of their own, as they began expanding and contracting repeatedly, as though they too were breathing along with their body's owner.

Inhale, exhale; their rhythmic movements exuded a sense of harmony.

Meanwhile, from within the orifices, steam was rising up in a mistlike form.

The regularity of the breathing gradually decreased, each breath generally sounding only once every few minutes, accompanied by a shuddering of the orifices.

Gradually, Yan Zhaoge's entire body was covered by a faint layer of white mist, his entire body coming to resemble a statue of the purest white. No signs of life could be felt from him whatsoever as he just sat there quietly, as if pondering something.

Suddenly, Yan Zhaoge's body trembled, as the white mist that was closely sticking to his skin suddenly began breaking apart like some porcelain pottery. Innumerable cracks began spreading around its entirety, making it look as though multiple spiderwebs had taken up residence there.

Streams of aura-qi which were formless and colourless yet possessing the faint luster and tangibility of a metal shot out from within these cracks, leaving behind countless scars within the air.

A sound resembling the long roar of a dragon was emitted from Yan Zhaoge's mouth, going from strong to big, getting stronger by the second.

The cracks on his body were also becoming more and more densely clustered. Nearing its end, the dragon's roar had already reached the point of devastating one's ears to the point that they wished they were dead. Now, the barrier that the layer of white mist had formed just outside of Yan Zhaoge's body, finally broke completely apart!

The aura-qi that was forceful and keenly-edged as well as refined and fierce began circling Yan Zhaoge's body, flowing unceasingly, its sharpness showing through.

Yan Zhaoge opened his eyes, smiling slightly. Now, he would be able to release his aura-qi outside of his body, as well as recall it, at will.

With but a mere thought, the aura that was currently being emanated from his body instantly vanished, not a single trace of it remaining.

The aura had been externalised. The outer aura Martial Scholar realm, successfully attained.

Yan Zhaoge closed his eyes once more, beginning to infuse aura-qi into his marrows in order to temper and strengthen them.

Through his unflagging efforts, Yan Zhaoge could already feel the major changes that were currently taking place within his body.

The marrows created blood. They having been tempered, the blood and qi of the martial practitioner would be correspondingly strengthened.

The pursuit of the martial dao was about the non-stop strengthening of one's body.

The Body Refinement realm consisted of three major stages: the fleshly-tempering stage, the meridian-bolstering stage as well as the qi-directing stage. Of these, the late fleshly-tempering stage,

when the bones and the blood began to resonate, was the first time that martial practitioners would be working on the tempering of their bones. When performed successfully, their strength and durability would be increased greatly; the Martial Artist's agility and strength would undergo a meteoric rise.

The late qi-directing stage, which was when the marrows within the bones were purified, was where the martial artist would begin the tempering of the bone marrows for the first time. With the help of the Martial Artist's qi and blood which would come together with them to become one, the Martial Artist's marrows would undergo a deep infusion of inner qi, thus taking the first steps in discarding the original fleshy body for a new, better one.

However, the inner qi of a martial practitioner in the Body Refinement Realm was far from being able to compare to the aura-qi of a Martial Scholar. Having reached the outer aura stage and used the aura-qi for a second tempering of the marrows, a martial practitioner would experience yet another huge leap in strength.

From the inner aura to the outer aura stage, the Martial Scholar would be strengthened greatly, and in all areas as well.

At this moment, while viewing the internal state of his body, Yan Zhaoge could clearly see that the last, minor impurities that his inner qi had been unable to clear out from his body were currently being expelled little by little from within his bones. While their quantity was small, they were all jet-black like ink; all of these remaining dregs were the deepest and worst of the impurities that had resided within his bones.

The impurities having been expelled, not only were there changes to the bone marrows, even Yan Zhaoge's very bones became sparkling and crystal clear.

Every foot of bone was perfect, pure, well-proportioned, durable, tough, powerful.

Every new drop of blood that was born within his body was congealed and flawless, faintly shining with a silver light as if it was a droplet of mercury.

The flowing of his entire body's blood no longer emitted the 'hua, hua' noise that rivers made, the silence causing a grave mood to permeate the air, yet the blood flow was not hindered as a result, flowing along naturally.

Bones like crystal, blood like mercury, this was the special trait of an early outer aura Martial Scholar!

It was only that other martial practitioners who had just reached the level of being able to externalise their aura , newly stepping into the ranks of outer aura Martial Scholars, usually required a large amount of time to complete the second purification of their marrows, thus reaching his body's current state.

Having entered this state was equivalent to being one step closer to breaking through into the mid outer aura stage, as it was one of the necessary steps that were required for this.

And the time which Yan Zhaoge had taken to complete all this had been but a brief moment.

Having succeeded, Yan Zhaoge smiled, stood up and took out a small porcelain bottle.

Tipping over the bottle, he retrieved a black pill from within, from which white steam was rising. Surrounded by that fog, the surface of the black pill held a faint luster which resembled that of black jade.

This was the clan's reward which had already been delivered into his hands, the Profound Spirit Pill.

Although he had already successfully broken through into the early outer aura stage, Yan Zhaoge did not rush to consume the pill. Instead, he scrutinized it for a moment, also sniffing it with his nose.

After a short while, he took out a golden needle, thrusting it into the pill.

The pill shuddered as if it was alive. Yan Zhaoge did not stop. After nine consecutive thrusts, the Profound Spirit Pill regained its former calm, a faint white medicinal qi flowing back into the nine holes created by the needles in a much greater amount than before.

Only now did Yan Zhaoge nod in satisfaction, consuming the pill before entering the meditative position to absorb its effects and

train his qi.

After who knows how long, Yan Zhaoge called, “Ah Hu!”

Ah Hi, waiting outside the enclosed room, knocked on the door, “Young Master.”

“The thing I asked you to find for me earlier; how’s it going?” Yan Zhaoge asked.

Ah Hu answered, “There’s been news, but it still requires verification.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, “Put your heart into it; this thing, is even more important than the Internal Crystal Furnace.”

HSSB 30: Flaunting A Non-Existent Authority

Ah Hu entered the room, saying, “According to the news we currently have on hand, a Ten-Leaf Golden Orchid was spotted in the Luliao Mountains.”

Yan Zhaoge considered, “The Luliao Mountains? They’re rather close to the Sealing Dragon Abyss, and are situated within Eastern Tang territory as well.”

“Wu, since I’ve got nothing to do anyway, I might as well go take a look at those Luliao Mountains, and also see if I can lure out that Crimson Spirit Flag Master again.”

The abnormalities within the Sealing Dragon Abyss, the Ghost Hatchet Elder Han Sheng suddenly appearing as well, as well as the Crimson Spirit Flag Master’s movements on the side, had caused the Sacred Sun Clan to similarly stand ready to make a move at any moment, raring to go.

Although the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom was biased towards Broad Creed Mountain, if the clan only had a single Yan Xu stationed in the Eastern Tang, it would obviously not be sufficient for dealing with whatever situation might arise.

As he held heavy responsibilities, the East Elder had not been able to stay for long. However, Broad Creed Mountain had also deployed other experts over. While these were tumultuous times within the Eastern Tang, Broad Creed Mountain did not lack

manpower there.

It was only that he did not know whether the Crimson Spirit Flag Master would once again risk making an appearance.

As for the Ten-Leaf Golden Orchid that he had ordered his subordinates to search for, to Yan Zhaoge, it held much greater significance.

The competition between Yan Zhaoge's father and his second apprentice-uncle for the position of Broad Creed Mountain's next Clan Chief had already reached the most critical stage.

Yan Zhaoge's Grand Master, this generation's Clan Chief, had long since revealed his intention of going into closed door cultivation, from which it was unknown if he would ever emerge.

This time's cultivation session would be different from those of the past. It would last for an indeterminate amount of time, and it was possible that it would be ages before he emerged. Well, if he even managed to avoid dying, his dao perishing alongside him, that is.

Thus, the old Clan Chief planned to directly appoint an official successor before beginning his closed door cultivation session.

To Old Man Yan, taking down Cui Xin and Wen Ningzhi, these Elders of the Assignment Hall, had been but an inconsequential thing, the bigger picture considered.

As for the Internal Crystal Furnace, it could not yet produce a spirit grade artifact at this current stage. At most, it could only be said to have added a few appearance points, not being able to give the definite victory to their side.

From a certain standpoint, it seemed to be doing more for Yan Zhaoge's position instead.

Yan Zhaoge knew this full well, and and had already been prepared for this eventuality early on. Thus, even while trying to upgrade the Internal Crystal Furnace, he had been making some other plans as well.

The concoction of a certain pill.

Ever since the time of the Great Calamity, this precious pill had not appeared in the Eight Extremities World.

If he managed to achieve success in this matter, it would be an extremely huge boost for his own father's bid for the position of Clan Chief; in fact, it might even win them the position in a single move.

Leaving the mansion, Yan Zhaoge walked along the streets of Overlooking Abyss City, pondering as he went.

“Right, Young Master, there's still something else. Earlier, you asked me to search for two different types of medicinal

ingredients. They had run out of stock within all the markets of the Eastern Tang; I could only obtain a small amount from the Kingdom's secret vault.”

“Check for me whether this was because of the greatest alchemist organisation in the Eastern Tang Kingdom, the Pill Stone Pavilion, purchasing a large amount of it without care.”

‘At the same time, the Pill Stone Pavilion also recently started suddenly selling the previously long-extinct supreme healing medicine, the Ash Cloud Powder.’

Yan Zhaoge thought about it for a moment, then said, “The Ash Cloud Powder, as I remember, was made from the Pill Fire Sword God Gao Zhe's personal secret pill formula. When Gao Zhe died, the pill formula was lost and it vanished along with him.”

As the various Sacred Grounds all began gradually determining the power structure within the Eight Extremities World, the Pill Fire Sword God was one of the few peak masters who had struck it out on his own, even reaching the Martial Saint stage in his later years.

His personality had been extremely domineering and arrogant, but he had also had real power to back it up.

Even while being splendidly proficient in the sword, he had even become one of the top alchemists of the era, having had great achievements in both the fields of sword and alchemy.

It was only that the relationship between him and Broad Creed Mountain had not been so harmonious.

However, this person had already died many years ago.

“Perhaps through the work of fate as well as coincidence, the Pill Stone Pavilion obtained the secret pill formula Gao Zhe had left behind that year.” Ah Hu guessed.

Yan Zhaoge shook his head, as if saying that well, that might be true, but that might also not be true. He did not put it to heart.

The Ash Cloud Powder had indeed been one of the most supreme healing medicines of the time that it would not hurt to have; but to him, it was not really something he definitely had to obtain.

After having walked for a while, Yan Zhaoge’s heart suddenly twitched slightly as turning his head, a few figures appeared at the opposite end of the street.

That group of people seemed to in the midst of an argument. While the distance was rather far, with Yan Zhaoge’s auditory power, he was naturally able to hear all of it clearly.

“Junior apprentice-brother Fei, the other party is obviously just unreasonably making things difficult for you; why do you even bother to listen to him!” Said a tall youth, his face filled with unhappiness at how his friend was currently being treated.

He was a young disciple who had followed Yan Zhaoge over from the clan for tempering, whose name seemed to be Lan Wenyan.

The few people beside him were also young disciples of the clan who had come out for tempering.

The previous mission at the Sealing Dragon Abyss having ended, the missing Ye Jing aside, out of the remaining fifteen disciples, some had chosen to return to Broad Creed Mountain while the rest had decided to remain in Overlooking Abyss City to gain more experience and continue their tempering.

In front of Lan Wenyan, a youth of around the same age as him was seated on the ground.

He laughed helplessly, “Senior Apprentice-brother Ma is in complete charge of our day-to-day cultivation; what he requests of me, I naturally have to follow.”

Lan Wenyan raged angrily, “But with your current cultivation, if you go under the large waterfall for an hour, there’s the possibility of something bad happening to you.”

“A whole hour; does he want to kill you?”

The youth surnamed Fei had a melancholic expression on his face, “Well, I won’t exactly die, though; at most, it’ll be like the previous time when I keeled over and fainted and he pulled me out of the water.”

Someone said from the side, “Did you offend him unwittingly, such that he would want to purposely take revenge on you?”

Junior apprentice-brother Fei sighed, “I was too ignorant of the world in the past. When he was around being corrupt, I wrecked his intended plans; naturally, he now wants to turn around and take care of me.”

“Isn’t it settled then? You were also not in the wrong; what do you have to be scared of? What he’s done to you; you can just reflect all of it to the Acting Elder ah.”

Junior apprentice-brother Fei answered in a muffled tone, “I did think that way once. It was only later that I realised that at that person’s back was the Acting Elder himself; otherwise, how could he have walked out of it unscathed, and be taking it out on me now?”

“Even if I did report him to the Acting Elder, Senior apprentice-brother Ma just needs to say that he did what he did to induce me to work harder in my cultivation, thus getting out of it easily. At most, he will just change his method of torturing me. Not being able to bear having to suffer any punishment, he will definitely get back at me with even greater vigor than before.”

Junior apprentice-brother Fei looked at Lan Wenyan and the others, standing in front of him, and laughed helplessly, “Initially, in order to earn a little more, I applied to leave the clan and come here. If I had known that it would be like this, I definitely wouldn’t

have come; I really thought about things too simply in the past.”

“Now, if I want to return to the clan’s headquarters, I would still have to communicate my desire to the Acting Elder first. But with senior apprentice-brother Ma blowing things up from the side...I can’t agitate him, but even hiding from him seems like it would be impossible.”

Lan Wenyan’s eyebrows were clenched tightly together. Having entered the clan together with this junior apprentice-brother Fei in front of him, the two shared a very close relationship. Having arrived in Overlooking Abyss City this time, he had originally thought that it would be a joyful scene of old friends reuniting once more, but had instead discovered that his old friend had ended up in such a tragic state.

After considering for a moment, Lan Wenyan said hesitantly, “This time, we came here along with senior apprentice-brother Yan. Senior apprentice-brother Yan’s position is rather special; if you can invite him to help you, perhaps senior apprentice-brother Ma will not dare to make trouble for you anymore, and your being transferred away from Overlooking Abyss City might still be possible.”

“The senior apprentice-brother you are referring to is Senior Brother Yan Zhaoge?”

Junior apprentice-brother Fei’s eyes brightened for a moment, but very quickly dulled, “This sort of minor thing is something that senior apprentice-brother Yan might not care about; also, I’ve heard that the relationship between him and Overlooking Abyss

City's Xu Chuan is very good.”

Lan Wenyan said, “Then we'll help you to report it directly to the clan.”

“Senior apprentice-brother Ma has only been making it difficult for me in a few insignificant matters; any actual faults of his cannot be proven. Even if people from the clan come over and ask, he can still deny it.”

He smiled helplessly yet again, ‘Forget it, forget it; I'll just tolerate it. Having released all of his pent-up anger, senior apprentice-brother Ma's anger should have been quenched. It's not like he will actually kill me; I'll just take it as though I'm really undergoing some especially tough tempering then.”

Yan Zhaoge looked peacefully at this scene, his expression not changing in the least bit.

He only tilted his head to the side, “In my memory, none of Xu Chuan's personal disciples are surnamed Ma; there's no such person amongst his relatives either?”

“That's right,” Ah Hu nodded, before temporarily taking his leave.

A short while later, he reported back, “That person is known as Ma Yue; he is the descendant of a past Elder of our clan. In his youth, Xu Chuan was once helped out by that very Elder Ma;

because of that, he's been watching over that man's descendant, Ma Yue."

Yan Zhaoge raised his eyebrows, "Xu Chuan himself is somewhat 'clean', in taking care of a benefactor's descendant, he would tolerate that person's corruption?"

Ah Hu shook his head, "Due to the rush, I couldn't obtain any clearer details on what happened. Still, Xu Chuan might not have known about this matter."

"In front of Xu Chuan, this Ma Yue pretends to be very humble and respectful. Having done some small wrong, Xu Chuan would also forgive him on Elder Ma's account."

"Thus, Ma Yue ended up flaunting a non-existent authority, leading to others being unable to easily reveal his matter to Xu Chuan."

Ah Hi laughed, "A classic case of 'fooling the subordinates and deceiving the superior'.

Yan Zhaoge did not laugh along, however.

Instead, he narrowed his eyes, "No, with Xu Chuan's ingenuity, just Ma Yue and a couple of his own subordinates could not have pulled the wool over his eyes."

"There is also someone helping that Ma Yue, except that that

person's target is actually Xu Chuan himself.”

“This Ma Yue is, step by step, turning into a weak point of Xu Chuan's. Who knows when he will suddenly make an irredeemable mistake, dragging Xu Chuan down with him in the process.”

“Especially with Xu Chuan now holding the position of Acting Elder in both the Spirit Wind Canyon and Overlooking Abyss City; I'm afraid that the other party should already be preparing to make their move...”

Seeing the strained smile on junior apprentice-brother Fei's face, Lan Wenyan and the others were about to continue saying something, but were interrupted by a voice sounding out from the side, “Junior apprentice-brother Fei, why haven't you gone yet? Could it be that you still need your Senior Brother to personally wait for you over by the waterfall?”

A young male of an average build walked over, smiling as he looked toward the crowd, suddenly letting out a low laugh as he said, “Yes, I am intentionally making trouble for him; but what can you do about it?”

The newcomer was that Ma Yue. The lips of the youth surnamed Fei twitched slightly, but he did not let out a sound. Shooting a helpless smile at Lan Wenyan, he walked towards Ma Yue.

“You do not need to leave with him.” A cool, clear voice suddenly resounded, as Sikong Qing's figure appeared before the crowd.

Lan Wenyan's face revealed a hint of excitement as he hurriedly greeted Sikong Qing, "Senior apprentice-sister Sikong."

Sikong Qing's line of vision moved past the youth surnamed Fei, and also Ma Yue.

"Painstakingly cultivating and tolerating hardship with perseverance are originally good things; some of the clan's senior generation will also forcefully make their disciples accept such hardship."

"But those stem from good intentions, rather than a selfish, narrow desire for revenge."

Ma Yue looked first at his own white garb, then at the blue robes that were draped over Sikong Qing's inner white clothes, as a hint of viciousness flickered in the depths of his gaze.

He laughed, "Junior apprentice-sister must be joking; I was simply entertaining them with a small joke."

Sikong Qing said mildly, "It wasn't funny."

Ma Yue laughed darkly, "You, junior apprentice-sister Sikong, are garbed in blue robes; I naturally cannot compete with you."

"Still, how long are you going to be staying in this Overlooking Abyss City? And how much longer can he continue depending on you? If you remember, you do not possess the authority to transfer

him away from here, no more than you have the authority to send me away.”

“With you gone, whatever will he do?”

HSSB 31: The New And Old Hegemons

Ma Yue smirked as he looked over Lan Wenyan and the others. “If you don’t want to stand under the waterfall, we can always find something else to play. It’s fine if we take a short break; we can just wait a couple more days before resuming our playtime.”

He cast a glance at junior apprentice-brother Fei. Upon seeing his lowered head, Ma Yue laughed and looked back at Sikong Qing and Lan Wenyan: “You lot can go back to the clan and report me, but what are you going to say? That I was too fervent in urging a junior apprentice-brother to train?”

Lan Wenyan glared at him, his eyes practically shooting out flames.

Ma Yue didn’t even look at Lan Wenyan, as he stared Sikong Qing straight in the face. “Whatcha gonna do, hit me?” he taunted.

“They can’t beat me in a fight, and your cultivation is higher than mine. Without any provocation from me, you’ll be the one breaking sect rules if you attack me.”

Ma Yue maintained his frivolous expression as he backed up: “You see, junior apprentice-sister Sikong, I definitely don’t dare to provoke you. Whatever you say is however it’ll be. If junior apprentice-brother Fei doesn’t want to come to the waterfall with me, I definitely won’t force him to... after all, I’ll do whatever you say.”

“Not just today, but whenever you’re here – I’ll definitely listen to you.”

“As for when you leave, heh...”

As Ma Yue kept backing up, he suddenly bumped into someone behind him.

He started and whirled around, only to immediately be frightened out of his wits.

The person who appeared in front of him was none other than Xu Chuan!

Xu Chuan’s demeanor was calm as he looked at Ma Yue, his face betraying not the slightest hint of rage, though that only served to increase Ma Yue’s terror.

“After junior apprentice-niece Sikong leaves, then what?”

Ma Yue rallied his spirits: “Xu... Elder Xu, when did you get here...”

Xu Chuan replied, “Everything that I should have heard, I heard.”

Ma Yue immediately felt his vision turn dark.

His legs went soft, practically bringing him to his knees.

Xu Chuan shook his head and waved his hand. From behind him, two of his attendants supported Ma Yue as they brought him away.

“Elder Xu, my grandfather...” Ma Yue wanted to speak, yet found that his entire body was controlled, rendering him unable to make a sound.

He was left with only one resounding thought: “...it’s over!”

“Henceforth, he will no longer appear in Overlooking Abyss City, nor will he be able to use my name to intimidate others.” Xu Chuan gave Sikong Qing and the others a slight nod, then turned around to leave.

None of them knew, but this person who held the position of Acting Elder in both Overlooking Abyss City and Spirit Wind Canyon, Elder Xu, felt his back dripping with cold sweat. “Thank goodness for junior apprentice-nephew Yan’s warning; otherwise, there would have been a huge disaster in the near future!”

Lan Wenyan and the rest of the group looked at one another, remaining at a loss for words.

“...Perhaps it was senior apprentice-brother Yan.” Sikong Qing looked at Xu Chuan’s swiftly departing shadow, and quietly spoke.

They instantly understood. Looking around everywhere, only

now did they discover Yan Zhaoge some distance away.

The party hurriedly walked over to give their thanks.

Seeing the group's expectant yet uncertain expressions, Yan Zhaoge laughed and shook his head. Looking at the youth surnamed Fei, he said: "In the future, he will no longer be troubling you."

"However, devote yourself to your training and always resist giving up. If you often press yourself, the greatest beneficiary will always be yourself. "

"For example, if you had junior apprentice-sister Sikong's cultivation and position, then even without anyone else making an appearance, he still wouldn't dare to trouble you."

Junior Brother Fei bit his lower lip as he faced Yan Zhaoge with reverence: "Yes, I will keep Senior Brother Yan's teachings close to my heart."

Wanting to express his thanks, but not quite knowing what to say, his emotions were quite agitated. Lan Wenyan tugged on his sleeve, then quietly said: "It's good if you can remember it. Senior Brother Yan even had the patience to deal with this lowly Ma Yue to help people as unimportant as us."

"Yes." Junior apprentice-brother Fei immediately nodded his head. When he met Yan Zhaoge's gaze, he felt a rush of gratitude

and respect.

Lan Wenyan and the others also felt the same way.

Yan Zhaoge didn't bring up the other party's matter again, simply letting out a small laugh before he asked: "From your outfits, it looks like you're setting off a journey. Where are you headed?"

Sikong Qing calmly responded: "I was going to bring our junior apprentice brothers and sisters to the Luliao mountain range."

Yan Zhaoge said indifferently: "En, you have experience entering the mountains. Be careful and assist them."

Sikong Qing responded: "I understand."

Since Yan Zhaoge had made his move, the others naturally were no longer afraid of Elder Xu preaching one thing and acting the other. The worry that they had had over Ma Yue's affair just now was instantly dispelled, as the mood became more relaxed.

Another disciple was suddenly curious and he asked Yan Zhaoge: "Brother Yan, those story tellers and puppeteers always mention a 'Mr Dong'. Is he some heaven-shaking ancestor of our sect?"

Due to Overlooking Abyss City's proximity to the Sealing Dragon Abyss, there were a great number of martial practitioners in the city, and fewer regular people. Still, there were some people who

braved the dangers and came here to make a living.

Because of the marketplace, the city was unexpectedly bustling with noise and activity.

Right now, at the roadside, there was a big crowd of children engrossed by a puppet show.

The puppeteer was controlling two large puppets which were currently fighting back and forth on the stage. He himself was hidden behind the stage, sending spittle flying as he shouted out: "With one stupendous blow by Mr Dong, the heavens and earth were instantly shattered, the sea was split in half, and he beheaded the great flame demon king!"

"That flame demon king dared to trespass in the Eight Extremities World, wreaking havoc wherever he went. Yet, when he met Mr Dong, he learnt that while having come here successfully, he wouldn't be able to leave!"

In the street show, the two puppets looked quite old fashioned, but their handiwork was quite refined.

One puppet was a middle aged man holding a long saber with an extremely tyrannical expression.

Meanwhile, the other puppet was a blazing red. Despite resembling a human, it looked extremely ferocious and looked more like a devil or monster. What's more, the hair on top of its

head was fashioned to look like a flame.

Under the control of the puppeteer, the puppet of the middle aged man brought his blade to the neck of the fire devil, causing the fire devil puppet to suddenly fly backwards.

Not only were the children in great spirits, the surrounding spectators all whooped and let out a cheer.

Yan Zhaoge looked at the play and spoke: “That’s correct, that ‘Mr Dong’ is our sect’s Ancestor Dongge.”

The exalted Hantian or heaven shaker, Zhan Dongge, was Broad Creed Mountain’s strongest expert. The period during which he was in control of the clan was known as the Golden Age of Broad Creed Mountain.

The peak martial artist Zhan Dongge was the strongest expert in the entire Eight Extremities World during his era, someone who could look down on all the outstanding heroes. Likewise, his Broad Creed Mountain was also undisputedly the number one Sacred Ground that looked down on the rest of the world.

Unfortunately, when Zhan Dongge and Broad Creed Mountain were at their pinnacle, the world underwent a shocking change.

Over the endless eastern sea of the Eight Extremities World, a crack suddenly appeared in the heavens themselves.

Between another flame devil world and the Eight Extremities World, a passageway had formed.

The pinnacle existence in that flame devil world wasn't the human race. Rather, it was the race of flame devils, who had inborn great strength and possessed a brutal and tyrannical temperament.

The flame devils invaded. Under Zhan Dongge, Broad Creed Mountain rallied the outstanding heroes of the world to resist the invasion.

The flame devils possessed more experts, and the battles were disadvantageous for those of the Eight Extremities World. Finally, it was Zhan Dongge going one against five and managing to singlehandedly kill the flame devils' strongest expert, along with two of the other demon kings, while also grievously wounding the other two demon kings, that caused the tides to finally shift.

The last group of flame devils was finally forced back into the flame devil world, but the losses sustained by the forces of the Eight Extremities World were also disastrous.

The mighty elder Zhan Dongge was akin to a one man army, glorious in battle, but the final wound he had sustained had dried up his last reserves of energy. The greater part of the experts of Broad Creed Mountain had also perished in the war.

After that, even though the other Sacred Grounds had also sustained grievous losses, they saw the opportunity to overtake the most grievously damaged Broad Creed Mountain. It was during

this time that the Sacred Sun Clan gradually distinguished itself, eventually becoming the new number one Sacred Ground.

In recent years, Broad Creed Mountain had not had a good relationship with the Sacred Sun Clan, with the primary reason being that each felt the status of the old and new hegemons to be distasteful.

The passageway between the two worlds still existed, meaning that even though the flame devils had been forced back into their own world, the threat still existed. In the past couple of years, there had been nonstop fighting between the two worlds.

It was also because of the fight with the flame devils that the checks and balances between the sacred grounds could be maintained. Within the Eight Extremities World, the situation could be described as peaceful, thanks in large part to this state of affairs.

Storytellers and puppeteers were afraid to directly use the name of their savior, Zhan Dongge. Due to this reason, the name 'Mr Dong' came about. Of course, most people had only limited knowledge of the events of that year, causing them to infer all sorts of bizarre things like gods and demons.

Of course, for normal people, Zhan Dongge had truly become a mythological figure to them, much like the rest of the events from that time.

Because it also served the purpose of raising the renown, the present day Broad Creed Mountain had not forbidden the telling of such stories, instead choosing to turn a blind eye to it.

The group of Broad Creed Mountain disciples recalled the teachings that they had read in the sect, as well as the recounts from their seniors. Imagining that past time, they felt like crying for a brief period: “That year, our sect... ah!”

Standing at Yan Zhaoge’s side, Ah Hu suddenly showed a slight change in expression as he looked in the other direction.

Yan Zhaoge followed his gaze to see a fully-bearded youth dressed in white appear.

The youth cast a glance first at the puppet show, then at the group of Broad Creed Mountain disciples, before shaking his head: “Only being able to live in the past and deceive themselves...pitiful creatures.”

HSSB 32: Mr Dong And The Sacred Sun Saint

Once they saw the clothing and accessories of the Sacred Sun Clan disciples, also having heard what the other side had said, the faces of the crowd of Broad Creed Mountain disciples immediately filled with anger.

As that bearded white-robed man walked closer, his line of sight turned to look in another direction, “People ah, should still live in the moment.”

In that direction was actually yet another stage.

“The Sacred Sun Saint, thus, in broad daylight, turned into a rainbow and soared, illuminating the heavens and the earth...” Behind the stage, a voice recited, raising, lowering, stopping and changing its tone along as appropriately needed to fit the flow of the tale.

Broad Creed Mountain was not the only major power that had laid its roots in Overlooking Abyss City; the Sacred Sun Clan had similarly taken up residence here, where it also held considerable sway.

Thus, there were naturally storytellers or stage actors spreading around the legends of the Sacred Sun Clan here.

Most of these people did not possess any special thoughts or inclinations towards the two powers. They just provided the commoners here with whatever kind of story they liked in order to

make a living.

The Sacred Sun Clan's most famous legend that was popular among the commoners was related to their first Clan Chief, that legendary figure.

It was said in the world of commoners that this exalted man had ascended under the bright rays of the sun; amongst the martial practitioners of this world, a great many of versions of this story had spread.

Some said that he had attained an even higher cultivation realm, thus breaking through this mortal plane and ascending.

Some said that he still lived within some secret, forbidden ground of the Sacred Sun Clan, where he remained in secluded cultivation.

There were also rumours that he had fallen in the midst of secluded death cultivation long ago, etcetera.

What could only be said for certain was that he had not been seen in a long time; all of these various versions, lacked substance.

Under the leadership of this person, the Sacred Sun Clan, following the fall of Zhan Dongge, began its unstoppable rise, finally ascending to the position of the most powerful of the new generation of Sacred Grounds.

The white-robed man's gaze had fallen on that stage; the meaning of his words, did not have to be explained.

The Broad Creed Mountain disciples fell into a dejected state.

“Xiao Shen, what's with that large beard of yours?” Yan Zhaoge was the sole exception, looking rather bemused on top of the somewhat amused expression on his face as he looked at Xiao Shen.

Xiao Shen didn't answer, however. Instead, he twitched his ears as if listening for something, at the same time staring at Yan Zhaoge.

“The flow of blood and also the pulse are virtually inaudible, solemn yet smooth...the blood resembles mercury. You have reached the outer aura Martial Scholar realm? And also finished the second cleansing of the marrows within the bones so quickly?”

“Still, that's unimportant,” Xiao Shen made no further comment as he appraised Yan Zhaoge all over, “Yan Zhaoge, you beat up members of my Sacred Sun Clan in the Sealing Dragon Abyss; did you think that would be the end of that?”

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “You want to stand up for Chao Yuanlong and the others?”

Xiao Shen strode forward, coming to stand in front of Yan Zhaoge, “What else?”

The group from Broad Creed Mountain had not recognised the other party initially. After hearing Xiao Shen's name, however, they instantly realised who the person before them was.

He was the grandson of the Sacred Sun Clan's Grand Elder, and at the same time, a member of the Sacred Sun Clan's Four Rising Suns, alongside Chao Yuanlong. Having cultivated for longer, though, his cultivation realm was even higher than Chao Yuanlong's.

"Late outer aura Martial Scholar," Sikong Qing frowned, looking at Yan Zhaoge and Xiao Shen.

Like the earlier Chao Yuanlong who had been undefeated amongst late inner aura Martial Scholars, along his road of martial cultivation, Xiao Shen had also been one of the top few amongst those of the same stage; in fact, his achievements in battle were even more glorious than that of Chao Yuanlong.

As compared to Chao Yuanlong who had forsaken the sword for some non-mainstream martial arts, Xiao Shen had all along been acting according to convention and cultivating in the Sacred Sun Clan's most orthodox martial arts.

Despite that, he had still been able to outshine all those other young geniuses of the Sacred Sun Clan.

While at the early outer aura Martial Scholar stage in the past, he had defeated opponents of the mid outer aura Martial Scholar

stage, his name thus coming to shake the entire world.

While the crowd of Broad Creed Mountain disciples had confidence in Yan Zhaoge, with Xiao Shen's current cultivation realm, as well as the huge gulf in experience between them, they could not help but be shaken.

Xiao Shen's voice was rough, but his words were slow and ordered, "What you did to Chao Yuanlong and the others previously; I will pay you back in full today."

"Other than Chao Yuanlong, you also hit some of my other junior apprentice-brothers. Today, other than you, I will also choose some of those people standing behind you to accompany you."

At Xiao Shen bullying people with his cultivation realm like this, the disciples couldn't help but have dissatisfaction well up within their hearts, "You think my Broad Creed Mountain has no late outer aura Martial Scholars?"

Yan Zhaoge, though, had his expression unchanged, "Martial practitioners with a forty-year age difference, perhaps with three to five years of leeway given, are divided into different age categories."

"You and I have too huge a difference in age. Still, I'm fine with that; we'll all just take it that we're in the same age category then."

"Ah Hu, you don't have to participate."

Ah Hu glared at Xiao Shen with an unfriendly look on his face. Hearing Yan Zhaoge's instructions, he nodded, and retreated.

Xiao Shen stared at Yan Zhaoge, "Skill aside, you do indeed have some courage, at least."

"I will also not bully you based on our gap in cultivation. Your sword having broken Chao Yuanlong's Piercing Sun Needle Art and Heaven Striking Palm, I guess your sword arts must have something special about them. I'll just compete with you in that area then." Saying thus, Xiao Shen's pair of hands grabbed at the distant air.

From far away, the two artistes acting out "Mr Dong slays the Fire Demon King" and the "The Sacred Sun Saint Ascends in Daylight" suddenly felt their hands lighten.

Then, they found that the two wooden puppets which individually represented Mr Dong and the Sacred Sun Saint had completely disappeared from their hands.

The audience was in an uproar as they looked around in all directions, looking for the wooden puppets. Yet no one knew where the puppets had gone, or how they had vanished.

The two wooden puppets had both ended up in Xiao Shen's hands, grasping the cross which firmly kept locked in place the string with which they were controlled.

“I heard that you used a bamboo as a sword, wielding it skilfully; looks like you should be somewhat proficient in controlling over your aura-qi, and have the qualifications to be playing this little game with me.”

Xiao Shen laughed, “While this little thing is somewhat harder than a stick of bamboo, it is still very weak; if aura-qi that were too strong were to be infused within in, it would just explode. Therefore, you don’t have to worry about me bullying you with my higher level of cultivation, because using this plaything is equivalent to having restricted the amount of aura-qi we can use.”

“In the area of the amount of aura-qi we can draw on, both sides are the same. To obtain victory, we will have to compete in whose martial skills are more superior, and who is more proficient in controlling their aura-qi.” Saying thus, Xiao Shen threw the Mr Dong puppet towards Yan Zhaoge.

As Yan Zhaoge caught ahold of it, he suddenly laughed, “If I do not remember wrongly, the founder of your clan was chased into the mouth of a volcano by our clan’s founder exalted Hantian, not daring to emerge for a good half of his life.”

“Only when the fire demons invaded and he received our founder’s express permission, did he slowly crawl out from within?”

Xiao Shen looked at Yan Zhaoge and said coldly, “The people of Broad Creed Mountain only know how to talk about the past.

People who like to live in the past, should just turn into dust along with history.”

Saying thus, he flipped his palm, releasing his aura to surround his body.

The strings holding the puppet broke apart, but the puppet remained hovering in mid-air rather than dropping to the ground, as a faint metallic radiance suddenly began circulating around the surface of its body.

Under the effects of the released aura, the wooden puppet of inferior make began glowing with a brilliant light, as if it possessed a life of its own.

The four limbs of that wooden puppet moved about, directly striking a palm out at the Mr Dong puppet in Yan Zhaoge’s hands!

At the tiny, intricate puppet’s palm strike, a biting cold wind blew!

An explosion even resounded within the air, as if the air itself had been blown apart!

Seeing this, the hearts of the Broad Creed Mountain disciples all shivered, “No wonder despite knowing how senior apprentice-brother Yan defeated Chao Yuanlong, he still dares to issue this sort of challenge!”

Yan Zhaoge, on the other hand, laughed, as, with a flip of his palm, he also snapped the string connected to his wooden puppet.

With the infusion of his aura-qi, the eyes of the Mr Dong puppet seemed to have a light flickering within.

Instantly, Mr Dong transformed into the Exalted Hantian, as his aura blazed out awe-inspiringly in an instant.

The wooden short sword within the hands of the wooden puppet shook, then cut a line in the air, actually leaving in its wake temporary, suspended scars that were clearly visible to the naked eye.

“Perform well, Yan Zhaoge, at least let me have a little fun ah.”

At this moment, a cold, dark gaze resembling that of a snake resided within Xiao Shen’s eyes.

Under his control, the twin palms of the Sacred Sun Saint puppet attacked, going straight for the wooden puppet under Yan Zhaoge’s control!

HSSB 33: Slapping His Own Face

Under Xiao Shen's control, the Sacred Sun Saint puppet resembled an illusory shadow as it flew forward with both palms outstretched.

It was like the sun setting in the west; that final, remaining light changed to depict thousands of varying scenes, sad but beautiful in their unpredictability.

Sunset Thousand Illusionary Palms.

It was a martial art of the Sacred Sun Clan that could only be learnt by members of the direct lineage, one of the clan's Seven Great Sun Arts alongside the Heaven Striking Palm.

It was one of the few martial arts of the Sacred Sun Clan that was renowned for its individual techniques.

Having spent many years cultivating on this art, Xiao Shen had already gained a deep understanding of its true essence.

Even those of the senior generation within his clan who had stronger cultivations than him, could not compete with him in the usage and understanding of this martial art.

Under the effects of Xiao Shen's aura-qi, that puppet seemed to resemble a living cultivator, actually executing this martial art that contained many changes and variations to the point of utmost

fluidity.

“Controlling the puppet to this extent; it it were Xiao Shen itself, what sort of scene would it be?”

The crowd of spectating Broad Creed Mountain disciples felt their mouths turning bitter, as their palms slowly began to sweat.

Yan Zhaoge never looked at the puppet of the Sacred Sun Saint, as his sight remained on Xiao Shen’s hand that was controlling the puppet.

Against the fierce encroaching enemy, Mr Dong’s puppet did not hesitate in the slightest, just slashing out with its knife!

Right in front of their eyes, the originally lifeless puppet resembled a divine dragon as it soared up into the skies, breaking through the multiple layers of illusions created by the light of the setting sun.

A brilliant green light shot out, resembling a true armoured dragon rampaging about, unparalleled under the skies.

The multiple layers of illusions instantly dissipated as if they had been but shadows from a dream.

While the wooden weapon in Mr Dong’s hands was a short sword, Yan Zhaoge had the ability to use it as he would a long sword, despite its form. The sword technique of the Coiling

Dragon Sleeve that he had used was still performed at its peak state, dissipating Xiao Shen's Sunset Thousand Illusionary Palms.

At this, the Broad Creed Mountain disciples simultaneously whooped together in delight.

The corners of Xiao Shen's mouth, though, revealed a hint of cruel amusement.

"Do you think I am like that bull-headed Chao Yuanlong, only knowing how to rely on that bit of brute strength?"

Saying thus, Xiao Shen's hand movements through which the wooden puppet was being controlled became even more varied and precise, as innumerable, subtle variations of the Sunset Thousand Illusionary Palms played out.

Under the control of his aura-qi, the Sacred Sun Saint puppet began glowing with a faint light, resembling the last rays of the setting sun, which once again spread out to envelop Mr Dong.

This time, other than being sad and beautiful as well as unpredictable and greatly varied, the illusions exuded a feeling of desolation.

As the sun descended beyond the mountains and the land prepared to step into the darkness of the night, only a final hint of sunlight remained hovering at the edge of the sky.

However much the people wanted it to stay, however much they will not willing to see it go, their wishes were all meaningless.

What must come, must eventually come!

The Sunset Thousand Illusionary Palms were performed at a very deep level, as their true meaning was drawn out to the utmost at this very moment.

Those final remaining rays of the setting sun, like a cage of desolation, wrapped around the puppet of Mr Dong.

Yan Zhaoge's Coiling Dragon Sleeve was like a divine dragon soaring into the skies, presiding over the ordinary masses.

But at this moment, he could only open his eyes wide, watching the setting sun descend beyond the distant mountains, unable to revert this natural phenomenon of the skies.

The green sword light instantly dulled, as the sunlight blurred. The audience could only see the darkness that had suddenly converged, swallowing up the two puppets within its midst.

Xiao Shen laughed, "What will fall, will eventually fall."

"Reminiscing and gaining pleasure off old memories, is utterly useless!"

His aura-qi trembled; the next thing the audience knew, both palms of the Sacred Sun Saint puppet were already headed straight for the Mr Dong puppet's vitals at its chest area!

“Ah...” Seeing this scene, a cold light flashed within Yan Zhaoge's eyes.

That very same instant, the Mr Dong puppet's entire body abruptly twisted, its wrists suddenly moving!

The wooden short sword's sword-light retracted, returning to gather around the wooden puppet's body.

Where its sharpness had previously been on full display, things had suddenly regressed to a totally ordinary state.

It was like a sword which had been returned to its scabbard, and also like a genuine dragon that had soared up to transcend the nine heavens, its figure submerging into the clouds.

Coiling Dragon Sleeve, Dragon Concealed Cloud sword technique!

Xiao Shen stopped smiling, as an uneasy feeling suddenly welled up within his heart.

Uncomfortable, unable to relax, as if there were a threat at his back!

Yan Zhaoge had controlled Mr Dong to perform a stealth-based sword technique. Currently, Xiao Shen could only feel that his adversary had suddenly vanished without a trace from right in front of him.

His opponent was obviously still there, but the palm strike that he had been sure would land, had actually missed!

“Petty little tricks, a clown’s tomfoolery!” Xiao Shen raged, his rough voice even feeling a little shriller than usual.

He controlled the Sacred Sun Saint puppet while forcefully keeping in the momentum of his palm, holding it back without releasing it, carefully feeling for his opponent’s presence.

Having just detected a faint sign of life, Mr Dong’s body had already appeared before him!

A mass of biting cold sword light erupted, resembling a clump of clouds that had been struck apart by lightning as it headed straight for the Sacred Sun Saint.

It was as if a dragon had submerged into the clouds, then suddenly stuck out its massive head!

It was like in worldly battles; performing a Parthian Shot, or retreating from a battle whilst dragging the blade to lure the enemy into complacency before turning back to counterattack,

killing the enemies without giving them any time to react.

Xiao Shen laughed uglily, as the earlier unreleased momentum from his palm similarly erupted out with power, just in time to meet Yan Zhaoge's attack.

“I have you this time!”

Just as he was thinking that, he looked at the Yan Zhaoge across of him. His original sword intent that had been rising to the clouds had been withdrawn again, vanishing without a trace!

Yet again that stealth-based sword technique!

The Cloud Concealed Dragon sword technique, where the false coexisted with reality, and action coexisted with inaction, resembling a concealed divine dragon, hidden within the clouds, hidden without a trace, striking without any warning whatsoever!

Xiao Shen's Sunset Thousand Illusionary Palms missed completely!

And in the next instant, a fiery green sword-light appeared, sweeping through the great firmament, ripping apart the night sky, allowing light to once again illuminate the earth!

“After the sun sets, it will rise as usual. While floating clouds may obscure the eye for a time, there will surely be a day when they dissipate, and we once again see the light of day.”

Yan Zhaoge dragged out a long laugh. Substituting sword with short sword, the sword-light of Mr Dong, stabbed straight at the chest of the Sacred Sun Saint!

Xiao Shen's eyeballs contracted, but it was already too late for him to control the Sacred Sun Saint puppet to avoid the strike.

Countless invisible streams of a metallic radiance flickered, as they circulated around the body of the wooden puppet.

Aura-qi defences were raised all the way to the maximum possible level, as he tried with all his might to resist Mr Dong's blow.

But on Mr Dong's sword-light, a sharp green glow could be seen, that also had a metallic radiance flickering.

As this instant, the wooden short sword resembled a real, metallic long sword as it forcefully broke through its opponent's aura-qi defences, stabbing straight into the chest of the Sacred Sun Saint puppet!

“Heng!”

With a cold snort, Xiao Shen clapped his hands. The aura-qi on the body of the Sacred Sun Saint puppet, abruptly skyrocketed!

The Sacred Sun Saint puppet first disintegrated, before the the wooden short sword that was stabbed into its body also shattered.

This power flowed along the wooden short sword and extended into the body of the Mr Dong puppet, which instantly broke apart as well!

Seeing this, Yan Zhaoge was unmoved. He retracted his palms, putting his hands behind his back as he looked leisurely at Xiao Shen.

Xiao Shen stared straight at Yan Zhaoge in hatred, his eyes already closed to slits, a cold, vengeful gaze flickering within.

The large beard on his face, accompanied by his rough breathing, shook unceasingly.

Although it had not been like with Chao Yuanlong, who had been defeated without any face left to him at all, having lost all the way down to his underwear, at this moment, Xiao Shen's embarrassment had turned into fury, as a hot feeling lit up his face.

The method of competition had been chosen by him, but at the end, it was he himself who had broken its rules. It was equivalent to slapping himself in the face.

The draw which looked like it had ended with both sides dying together, had actually already ended with his defeat prior to that.

Yan Zhaoge looked at Xiao Shen through the corners of his eyes, shrugging his shoulders, “Actually, I agree with your words; people indeed shouldn’t be living in the past.”

“Securing a position in the present, and looking towards the future; that is the true path.”

How could Xiao Shen not understand the hidden meaning behind his words?

Xiao Shen stared at Yan Zhaoge, nodding his head slowly, “Yan Zhaoge, you’re good.”

“I admit that I belittled you in the past, but that doesn’t matter. Because, there are Many! More! Days! Ahead!”

Having said this, Xiao Shen did not speak any further, as he turned and left.

Yan Zhaoge laughed lightly, “The more time that passes, the less you’ll think that way.”

HSSB 34: Ye Jing Reappears

Xiao Shen having been defeated and sent packing by Yan Zhaoge, the crowd of Broad Creed Mountain disciples by the side were all looking at him with a yearning expression on their faces.

Within a short period of time, Yan Zhaoge had first defeated Chao Yuanlong, then frustrated Xiao Shen; amongst the young generation of martial practitioners, he was destined to stand unopposed in the limelight for the following period of time.

If it was said that his earlier victory over Chao Yuanlong had been a fight between martial practitioners of the same cultivation realm, the opponent that he had faced this time was Xiao Shen, whose cultivation had not only been a single stage above him.

Even though for the purposes of the competition, Xiao Shen had suppressed his cultivation base down to a similar level as Yan Zhaoge, a late outer aura Martial Scholar was a late outer aura Martial Scholar; their experience and understanding towards the martial arts they cultivated in were destined to be much deeper and more abundant than that of early outer aura Martial Scholars.

Some early outer aura Martial Scholars had barely started getting into touch with the variations and mysteries their martial arts had contained within, while others had yet to even begin doing so; late outer aura Martial Scholars, though, had long since clearly understood these within their hearts.

In actual combat, this large gap was all the more obvious.

The same amount of power that could exert a single unit of force when placed into the hands of an early outer aura Martial Scholar, when being released by a late outer aura Martial Scholar, could exert perhaps five to six units of force, or maybe even eight, nine, ten units of it, in the case of supreme geniuses.

However, in the competition earlier, the result had been that Yan Zhaoge had been the superior party, such that Xiao Shen had even been forced to renege on his own promise, only then managing to salvage an inglorious draw.

If it had been Yan Zhaoge from the Sacred Ground Broad Creed Mountain clashing against a rather average late outer aura Martial Scholar from outside, the result might still be somewhat easier for the world to accept.

However, with the opponent in question being the Sacred Sun Clan's Xiao Shen, the significance of the matter had completely changed.

After all, Xiao Shen himself was a well-known genius who had crossed levels to beat someone in the mid outer aura stage when he had only been in the early outer aura stage.

A wooden puppet that had been carved out, which was fragile beyond compare in comparison to a martial practitioner's aura-qi, had, under his control, actually resembled a real, living person, and even one who was a strong martial practitioner proficient in

the martial arts.

Even the controlled Sacred Sun God puppet's strike was something that Sikong Qing aside, none of the other Broad Creed Mountain disciples, who were all still in the Body Refinement Realm, could claim to be able to receive.

However, such a genius of the same generation had actually, like Chao Yuanlong, been reduced to nothing in front of Yan Zhaoge.

How could this not cause peoples' minds to race till the point of dizziness?

Sikong Qing looked at the shattered pieces of wooden puppet lying on the ground, her gaze flickering slightly as she seemed to be trying to grasp something.

"This girl does really have a martial-focused heart," As he glanced at her, Yan Zhaoge couldn't help but laugh while shaking his head, as he instructed her, "You have already been at the peak Body Refinement stage for quite some time; at your current level, you can already be considered a half-step Martial Scholar."

"Transforming your inner qi into aura-qi; the method is to reverse the flow of your inner qi's usual circulatory cycle, tempering it till the aura is formed. The senior members of our clan should have advised you on that already."

"Still, while attempting to reverse the flow of your inner qi, you

could try using ‘false, real, false, real, false, false, false, real’, such a tempo.”

Hearing his words, Sikong Qing’s eyes instantly brightened, as the other disciples behind her also pricked up their ears hurriedly.

At this moment, Yan Zhaoge’s position and prestige within their hearts even surpassed that of some of the Elders back at the clan.

Whether it was to hear Yan Zhaoge’s pointers on cultivation or the important things to take note of when breaking through from the Body Refinement to the Martial Scholar realm, everyone especially treasured this chance.

Between the Body Refinement and Martial Scholar realms, to the majority of martial practitioners within the vast Eight Extremities World, was a natural, incomparably wide gulf.

The difficulty of making this breakthrough was far higher than rising from the mid to late qi-conducting stage, and also rising from the late qi-conducting stage to reach the peak of the Body Refinement realm.

It was, perhaps, also even more difficult than going from the mid to late inner aura stage for Martial Scholars, or rising from the late inner aura Martial Scholar realm to the early outer aura Martial Scholar realm.

And correspondingly, becoming a Martial Scholar, there would

be a heaven-defying, earth-shaking increase in one's power.

All this was premised on the fact that the Martial Artist could temper their qi into aura and transform their inner qi into aura-qi, thus successfully reaching the Martial Scholar realm.

Aura-qi was far more condensed and refined than inner qi. If one said that inner qi was a gaseous body, aura-qi would then be a liquid substance. In a clash between the two, only the use of a miniscule amount of aura-qi would be required to cause the other side to be instantly dissipated.

While fighting with a Martial Scholar, a Martial Artist would find it very hard to make a countermove. Against absolute power, even the strongest techniques were hard to be of use. Most of the time, the Martial Scholar would be able to deal with all possible moves based on pure strength alone.

In most situations, this was a gap that could never be remedied, even through numbers.

As Yan Zhaoge just said whatever came to mind, Sikong Qing looked as though she had suddenly seen the light.

The gaze with which she looked at Yan Zhaoge was now filled with a little bit of respect; it was respect that had not surfaced even when Yan Zhaoge had made a move to cause Ma Yue to be punished.

Yan Zhaoge said to the others, “Everyone’s situation is different; the method that is suited to junior apprentice-sister Sikong may not be suitable for you. As you are now all still far from the Martial Scholar realm, you do not need to be impatient; just focus on walking stably step by step down your own path of cultivation.”

Truly convinced by Yan Zhaoge’s words, the group of Broad Creed Mountain disciples bowed towards Yan Zhaoge in unison, “Thank you senior apprentice-brother Yan for the pointers, we will definitely cultivate with the utmost diligence.”

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, Sikong Qing also bowed, different from her previous conciliatory gestures, a real, rather serious bow this time, “Thank you senior apprentice-brother Yan for the pointers.”

She stopped for a moment, then, looking at the other disciples, said, “I have gained a lot from senior apprentice-brother Yan’s pointers, and am preparing to go into secluded cultivation immediately. Thus, I cannot be going with you to the Luliao Mountains.”

While they could all empathise with her words, the disciples were all struck by a little bit of worry, thus unconsciously turning to look at Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge said mildly, “I don’t mind if I take you along this time, but does everyone want to count on me leading you for the rest of your lives?”

“Moreover, the place I’m going; it would actually be even more dangerous for you.”

The Broad Creed Mountain disciples looked slightly guilty at his words. As talents whom the clan usually spent a lot of resources on training, they did not lack independent people who liked to act on their own.

It was only that these past few days, Yan Zhaoge’s halo had really been too dazzling, radiating brilliant light to the point where everyone had been unconsciously brainwashed, coming to look at him as soldiers would their general.

The lot of them all exclaimed, “It is us who have grown reliant and lazy; thank you senior apprentice-brother Yan for the reminder. We are ashamed indeed.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, waving his hands dismissively, “It’s fine. Since it’s like this; let us part ways here.”

Having said this, he turned and strode out of the city, heading outside of it.

The group of Broad Creed Mountain disciples also took their leave from Sikong Qing, leaving the city for the Luliao Mountains.

On the path, there was no longer any sign of Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu; the two were long gone.

The Luliao Mountains, located just at the side of the Sealing Dragon Abyss, covered a vast area. While quite a large amount of precious resources was available there, the surrounding area was also rather dangerous. With their current cultivation base, travelling there was not easy in the least.

“We should really reflect on ourselves. Senior apprentice-brother Yan leading us is actually really like him carrying a load of burdens around; and we were all still so delighted at the prospect.” Said the young female disciple who carried a small Light Spirit Cat, a rather dejected expression on her face.

The Lan Wenyan beside her said, “The way we are now, we are indeed a great distance away from senior apprentice-brother Yan. Still, we should not be despondent over this; cultivating even more diligently as a result is the right path.”

Someone else muttered, “Could it be that you are also like that Ye Jing, eagerly looking forward to the day where you can fight senior apprentice-brother Yan head-on?”

Lan Wenyan said honestly, “At the very least, we have to strive for that; otherwise, while travelling alongside senior apprentice-brother Yan, wouldn’t we become a burden to him?”

Hearing his words, the group of Broad Creed Mountain disciples nodded their heads as they agreed, “It is as senior apprentice-brother Yan said. Securing a position in the present, and looking towards the future; that, is the true path.”

Amidst the multiple mountains, having reached their destination, the disciples separated to act on their own.

Lan Wenyan walked alone for a short time, before his eyes suddenly stared ahead dazedly, his gaze slack, “The junior apprentice-brother Ye Jing whom we had just mentioned earlier, this.....”

Not far in front of him, a lone figure stood.

HSSB 35: Flames Of Fury

A shirtless figure stood at the foot of the mountain.

On his body were countless streaks of flame; they were shifting about, as if they were alive.

He had a head of black hair, streaming behind his back. While his hair was jet-black in colour, when viewed from far away, it gave off a feeling that resembled flames.

This person's face also held the same streaks of flame, and within his eyes it seemed even more so that there was a fiery light flickering.

However, the Lan Wenyan who was nearby could still recognise that the youth with a rather unique appearance before him was exactly that Ye Jing who had gone missing that day in the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

While his face had been completely covered by the flamelike patterns, his facial features were still recognisable.

Still somewhat uncertain, Lan Wenyan asked probingly, "Is it junior apprentice-brother Ye Jing?"

The other party swiveled his head over, his gaze resembling fire, that might cause one's soul to tremble.

However, he still nodded, “That’s right, its me.”

Lan Wenyan asked curiously, “In the Sealing Dragon Abyss previously, you...”

Hearing the name of the Sealing Dragon Abyss, an obvious anger surfaced within Ye Jing’s eyes, as his expression also turned cold, “My life is such; I couldn’t have died that easily.”

“Whatever you say; it’s just good that you’re alright,” Lan Wenyan gave a relaxed sigh, “Everyone is worried about you. Still, senior apprentice-brother Yan said that you look have the look of someone favoured by the gods, and should be able to turn danger into fortune. Looking at it now, he was right after all, as expected.”

Before he had finished speaking, his words were broken off by a forceful yell.

“Yan Zhaoge!” Ye Jing’s eyes looked as though they were about to shoot out fire, “If not for him, how could I have met with such a huge calamity!”

“From the start, he already had ill intentions towards me, wanting to see me dead!”

“Still, I managed to survive, my cultivation even improving in the process. I’m afraid he’ll have to be disappointed.”

Ye Jing ground his teeth in anger, “Not exacting vengeance is not

the way of a man; this debt, I'll collect from him sooner or later!"

Hearing his words, Lan Wenyan frowned, "Junior apprentice-brother Ye, please calm down. I heard about the events of that day afterwards; Senior apprentice-brother Yan's Internal Crystal Furnace dropped into the deep abyss, thus exploding and injuring you. It was a purely accidental thing."

Ye Jing gave a cold snort, "Are you the roundworm within his belly, therefore knowing how he thinks? What he says, you just believe?"

"That Martial Grandmaster, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master, had originally come to find trouble for him, yet got manipulated by him instead. Using the fire seed, I was conveniently made that man's target in his place. All of these were well within his calculations!"

"A mere low-grade artifact covered your conscience, causing you to lean towards him so heavily?"

Hearing his words, Lan Wenyan got a little angry, "In the first place it was you who were greedy, going on your own accord to snatch senior apprentice-brother Yan's seed of True Fire. Otherwise, why would that Martial Grandmaster even target you? Do you really think of yourself as a prominent figure?"

"Having managed to get through such a huge ordeal alive, I can understand that your feelings would naturally be a bit riled and antagonistic. I don't blame you for that, but that doesn't mean that

you can shoot off your mouth with this kind of nonsense.”

He appraised Ye Jing, shaking his head, “What senior apprentice-brother Yan said, I believe! Why? At that time, having already plummeted? into the deep abyss, it was already highly likely that you were dead. Why would senior apprentice-brother Yan have to throw down his Internal Crystal Furnace then?”

“Moreover, how precious is an Internal Crystal Furnace? Just to kill you, senior apprentice-brother Yan destroyed his own Internal Crystal Furnace? Between the Internal Crystal Furnace from the legends, and you, a martial practitioner who’s not even a Martial Scholar yet, which is more precious?”

“Regardless of whether it were me, you, or any single one of the others who entered the Sealing Dragon Abyss along with him, if senior apprentice-brother Yan really wanted to kill someone of our level, let’s not talk about him striking us dead with a single palm strike, even a single breath of his would be something that we might not be able to withstand. And you say that he would have to intentionally destroy his own Internal Crystal Furnace?”

The other party’s words caused Ye Jing to instantly recall the previous indifference and disregard Yan Zhaoge had shown towards him.

The desolation, anger and hatred he had felt in the Sealing Dragon Abyss skyrocketed even more, almost consuming Ye Jing’s sanity.

Ye Jing's twin pupils were as red as fire, "A low-grade artifact, could already turn you into Yan Zhaoge's dog?"

"In that case, I'll beat first the dog , then the master!" With an enraged roar, he soared into the air, lunging toward Lan Wenyan!

Caught off guard, Lan Wenyan could only feel a burning wave of heat headed in his direction, almost causing him to suffocate.

Having survived a huge ordeal, Ye Jing's cultivation had really improved so greatly?

Without daring to hesitate, Lan Wenyan immediately put up a shield, precisely that low-grade artifact that Yan Zhaoge had gifted him with earlier on.

It was only that looking at this shield, Ye Jing was as if a hated enemy was right before his eyes, becoming even more enraged as his fists descended upon Lan Wenyan like a roaring tempest, a raging hurricane.

As if he did not know fatigue, his steel-like fists beat down unceasingly, like tireless waves causing the slow erosion and eventual collapse of a mountain ridge.

Finding it hard to properly utilise the first power of the low-grade artifact, Lan Wenyan actually couldn't hold the bare-handed Ye Jing back.

Finally, the artifact was sent flying out of Lan Wenyan's hand. Still, Ye Jing's punching motion did not cease, as he directly sent Lan Wenyan flying as well.

Looking at his opponent who had landed on the ground, blood flowing unceasingly from the corners of his mouth, Ye Jing's gaze was cold, killing intent constantly emanating from his eyes. Only after some time had passed did he finally shift away his gaze.

As his vision turned to fall on the shield which had fallen to the side, his eyes once again began burning strongly with the flames of fury and hatred. He rushed towards it, kicking out, directly sending that shield flying far off into the distance.

The shield turned into a little black dot, disappearing amongst the distant mountains far away.

Ye Jing glanced at the half-dead Lan Wenyan with hatred, then turned and left, headed for the depths of the mountain range.

“With the help of my ring, I reforged my fleshly body, but, because of the martial art that I train in, have become much more temperamental and quick to anger than before.”

After walking for some time, Ye Jing eventually calmed, as a faint regret also began surfacing within his heart, “While Lan Wenyan is indeed biased towards Yan Zhaoge, he never actually did help Yan Zhaoge to harm me, in truth. In nearly killing him, I was a little rash.”

But just as he thought about what he had experienced getting to this point, the rage within his heart surged once more, “Yan Zhaoge!”

“Hmph, having seen the behaviour of Lan Wenyan today, I can imagine that most others from the clan must be wearing the same pair of pants as that Yan Zhaoge.”

“His father is an Elder of the clan, and will definitely protect him. If I want justice to be served, it will be even more difficult to do so.”

“But so what? If I don’t expose Yan Zhaoge’s ugly side, and obtain the justice that I seek, doesn’t that mean that all the pain I’ve suffered has been for naught?”

“Power; if I want justice to be served, I must first possess sufficient power. If I were stronger than Yan Zhaoge, and stronger than his father, how would they dare to harm me, and distort the facts to be seen as faultless?”

Ye Jing raised his head, looking at the peaks of the mountains, his gaze cold and hard as steel, while hot like a burning fire, “I must definitely grasp the strongest power to be able to uphold justice for myself, and mine must definitely be a strength superior to that Yan Zhaoge father-and-son duo.”

“Yan Zhaoge, just wait; what you owe me, I’ll have you pay me back in full!”

.....

“Ye Jing heavily injured a fellow member of the clan?” Yan Zhaoge looked at Ah Hu standing in front of him, somewhat surprised.

That Ye Jing was still alive had come as no surprise to him.

The news of his reappearance had been passed down to the clan. To Yan Zhaoge, this could only be a good thing, as it had completely validated what he had told his inquisitors during his questioning.

Yan Zhaoge was not at all worried about facing the accusations of Ye Jing in person; when he used the Blood Soul Recollection ceremony to reproduce the scene of that time, all would naturally come to light.

But having just reappeared, Ye Jing nearly beat Lan Wenyan to death. This was something that Yan Zhaoge just couldn't understand, however much he scratched his head.

“That fella; when falling into the abyss, did he by any chance suffer a serious concussion?” Yan Zhaoge was totally baffled, “Why did he turn into a violent maniac ah?”

Ah Hu chuckled, “That fella surnamed Ye seems to be extremely prejudiced against you, Young Master. When that disciple tried to defend you, and argued with him a little as a result, he seemed to

have been angered.”

HSSB 36: The Off-Track Main Character

“Having survived his ordeal, that fella surnamed Ye actually experienced a huge leap in cultivation. Even with your low-grade artifact in hand, Young Master, the disciple he thrashed was not able to defeat the bare-handed him.”

Listening to Ah Hu’s narration, Yan Zhaoge was not surprised.

It was that main character’s halo; he was the Chosen One, after all. Having managed to get through a tough ordeal alive, he was naturally going to undergo a level up in strength.

Still, Ye Jing’s current doings still diverged somewhat from the him in Yan Zhaoge’s memories.

“More antagonistic, more stubborn, while also more temperamental, and quick to anger,” Yan Zhaoge stroked his lower jaw, pondering, “Looks like while that ring has managed to help him reforge his fleshly body, it has also brought about some negative side effects.”

“If it is a secret art which negatively affects one’s emotions when cultivated that Ye Jing, whose current cultivation base as well as strength of will both require tempering, is currently cultivating in, it would be very easy for him to fall under its effects.”

“From this point of view, having had his fleshly body first destroyed, then reforged, might not actually have been suitable for the current Ye Jing. If he had experienced this tribulation when

his cultivation was at a higher level, perhaps this problem wouldn't have cropped up."

"From the feel of it, a certain person's MC route seems to have gone a little off-track? Oh, what a grave sin; what a grave sin indeed."

"Still..." Yan Zhaoge's gaze gradually turned cold, "You have the right to go around beating people up just because of this?"

Having sorted out his thoughts, Yan Zhaoge looked towards Ah Hu, "After the clan received the news, what did they say?"

Ah Hu drew back his lips, "Firstly, that fellow having heavily injured a fellow disciple out of ill intentions, he will naturally have to be punished. Of course, an investigation will still be in order to get to the bottom of things; the clan will not just listen to a one-sided claim."

"Next, Young Master, your judgment that day was also proved to be right; of Ye Jing managing to survive through his ordeal, even managing to get out of the Sealing Dragon Abyss alive."

"However, because the hatred and anger Ye Jing holds towards you is just too intense, there are still people who doubt your initial explanation, believing that there remains an inside story regarding this matter that is still waiting to be uncovered."

"Therefore, after capturing and securing Ye Jing, I'm afraid that

you, Young Master, will really have to go and perform a Blood Soul Recollection ceremony together with him.”

Yan Zhaoge shrugged his shoulders, “I’m totally fine with it. Looking at Ye Jing’s performance now, second apprentice-uncle’s side probably won’t want to kill him in order to frame me. Instead, they are probably thinking about how to personally obtain the so-called inside story from him directly, in order to make things difficult for me.”

Ah Hu scratched his head, “How come I didn’t discover it earlier; that fella surnamed Ye seems so proficient in creating trouble ah.”

“Haha...” Yan Zhaoge just laughed, not speaking.

What’s up with this already?

Ah Hu gave a simple laugh, “This fella; it looks like he’s going to ruin himself in the hands of the clan this time.”

“Young Master, since the clan has already made a decision, isn’t it that we don’t have to bother about him anymore? It’s also to avoid being talked about, lest we make others feel that you have something you want to hide at all costs, thus wanting to kill that fellow.”

“Under such a situation, if you, Young Master, are once again made the scapegoat by others, it would be too unfair. If there is anything you know, just handing it over to those of the clan in

charge of this matter would be fine.”

Yan Zhaoge just said mildly, “Just not killing him is fine.”

“Don’t bind his hands and feet, and inform me as soon as you have found him. I will personally go and give him a good one, to account for things to junior apprentice-brother Lan, before passing the matter over to the clan.”

“Junior apprentice-brother Lan was injured by Ye Jing on my account, remember that that is reflected afterwards.”

“Other than medicine for his wounds and other nourishing supplies, also tell him that I have a mid-grade artifact reserved for him here. The day when he reaches the Martial Scholar realm is the day that the artifact will pass into his hands.”

Ah Hu laughed in a simple manner, “Yes, Young Master.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded his head, his vision falling once again onto the lofty mountain peaks in the distance.

At this moment, a black-clothed man materialised in front of Yan Zhaoge, carefully presenting him with a stalk of spirit grass, “Young Master, it’s been found!”

Yan Zhaoge’s eyes instantly brightened, “Ten-Leaf Golden Orchid!”

Receiving the spirit grass and appraising it carefully for a moment, the smile on Yan Zhaoge's face blossomed, as he fought back the urge to laugh uproariously to the heavens.

He had originally thought that the stalk of Ten Leaf Golden Orchid would only be a few hundred years old. However, it had turned out to be one that exceeded a thousand years of age. How could Yan Zhaoge not be happy at that?

After all, the Ten Leaf Golden Orchid was extremely rare. Added on to the fact that they were often plucked before they had grown of age, a thousand-year Ten Leaf Golden Orchid was not any easier to obtain than a seed of Li Flame True Fire.

Now, having obtained such a stalk of it so smoothly, Yan Zhaoge naturally rejoiced.

That black-clothed man continued speaking, "Young Master, while searching for the Ten Leaf Golden Orchid, we discovered an extraordinary valley by accident."

Yan Zhaoge asked, "Extraordinary in what way?"

"It was a glacial valley!"

Somewhat interested now, Yan Zhaoge asked, "Oh, a glacial valley? Where?"

At this current time of the year, the Luliao Mountains were

swelteringly hot. However, glaciers were actually present; this naturally drew Yan Zhaoge's attention.

That black-clothed man answered, "That's right; it is indeed a glacial valley. Also, it seems to be on a massive scale as well, while not looking like it came into existence naturally."

"It's just that when we discovered it, there appeared to be some sort of abnormalities occurring there; it's like an earthquake was taking place."

Having already gotten his hands on a Ten Leaf Golden Orchid, Yan Zhaoge had nothing better to do anyway.

He said, "Lead the way; let's go take a look."

The party advanced through the mountains. The further into their depths they walked, the cooler the surrounding air became.

This was obviously not a result of a natural change in climate. During this season every year, the entire Luliao Mountains had always been as hot as the inside of a steamer.

Yan Zhaoge understood that the party was already getting closer and closer to that glacial valley.

After walking for yet some distance, despite the fact that the fiery sun was shining right above their heads, an obvious coolness could already be felt within the air.

Ah Hu walked to a distant precipice, staring into the distance for quite some time before finally letting out a long breath, “Young Master, we’ve arrived!”

Yan Zhaoge also walked to the edge of the precipice. What appeared in front of him was, impressively, a huge canyon, what was out of the ordinary being that it was completely covered by ice and snow!

Meandering on for several tens of kilometres, the valley resembled a world of ice, as if an enormous, white dragon was crouching within a dense forest.

On the cliffs that formed the valley were ice and snow that were transparent and crystal-like, flickering with a blinding radiance under the rays of the sun. When viewed by normal people, they would feel a sharp pain assailing their eyes, almost as if they were about to be rendered blind.

Outside of the valley, there still existed the verdant, primitive forest of summertime; yet, walking into the valley, it was as though one had instantly gone straight from the height of summer to the peak of the harshest winter. The extreme difference between the two emanated a strange feeling.

Having observed this for a moment, Yan Zhaoge began his descent as he said, “Let’s enter.”

At the mouth of the valley, it could evidently be felt that the land

inside of the valley was rumbling furiously, the source of this coming from down below the ground.

As the party advanced into the fray, what greeted them was a world completely made up of ice and snow, as their figures were reflected off huge, transparent glaciers whose surfaces were as smooth as mirrors.

Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu walked at the forefront. As they reached the core, innermost region of the valley, an enormous lake of ice appeared before them.

Turbulent undercurrents could be seen at the bottom of the lake, surging in turmoil, as the faint sound of a dragon's roar resounded.

Yan Zhaoge gazed at the surface of the lake for a moment, then looked again at the surrounding valley for a bit, before muttering to himself, "This place, actually appears to be the resting ground for the bones of a Glacial Chi-Dragon. It is no wonder that even in such a swelteringly hot environment, such a strange glacial valley could be formed."

"The souls of dragons reside within their bones. Someone must have disturbed and roused the soul of the Glacial Dragon, thus leading to the abnormalities here and causing all this unrest."

Hearing his words, Ah Hu's eyes instantly sparkled, "A Glacial Dragon Bone Soul? Young Master, this is indeed a good object ah."

Immediately afterwards, he rubbed his big hands together somewhat embarrassedly, “But, Young Master ah, if it really is a Glacial Dragon Bone Soul, I’m afraid it can only be obtained by a Martial Grandmaster; whatever shall we do?”

HSSB 37: Glacial Dragon Bone Soul, Maiden Of Extreme Yin

Ah Hu looked rather sorrily at the surface of the ice lake, “If it really is a Glacial Dragon Bone Soul and we really have no way to obtain it, that would really be too much of a pity.

“Young Master, how about I return to call for assistance? Although we might have to split a little of our gains, at least it would be better than walking out of this treasure trove empty-handed.”

Yan Zhaoge similarly gazed at the lake’s surface. Below it, he could vaguely see a massive black shadow moving about, causing the skies to roil and earth to overturn, as the entire glacial valley seemed to be shaking along with it.

After pondering for a time, a hint of a smile suddenly appeared at the corner of Yan Zhaoge’s mouth, “Perhaps, there is a way. We can try.”

He took out a small metal plate, looking at the fragmented sections of ancient writings and patterns that were inscribed on its surface, before infusing some of his own aura-qi into it.

The patterns on the small metal plate instantly began shining with a white radiance.

Currently, within the glacial valley’s extremely cold

environment, the white light seemed to be glowing even more brilliantly than usual, as it gradually came to exude some ice-blue lustre.

Yan Zhaoge circulated his profound art silently, as his own aura-qi also began turning gloomy and cold.

Coming to stand just before the surface of the ice lake, he bent down, allowing the small metal plate to touch the layer of ice covering the lake.

The next moment, the rumbling below the lake seemed to have fallen silent for an instant.

Then, it quickly resumed, becoming fiercer and more violent, as the layer of ice covering the lake began cracking in several places.

That small metal plate suddenly erupted with a huge power, actually almost causing Yan Zhaoge to lose ahold of it.

Yan Zhaoge exerted additional strength on his fingers, pinching the metal plate tightly.

He now felt the obvious suction force that was emanating from within the lake, desiring to suck the metal plate into its depths.

From within the lake, the dragon's roar became even more clear and piercing.

As he stood up, invisible streams of air came to envelop his entire body, flickering with a faint metallic lustre. Having externalised his aura, Yan Zhaoge took a step forward, striding into the ice lake.

With his aura protecting his body, as well as automatically keeping the icy cold waters of the lake from getting into contact with him, Yan Zhaoge's figure faded as he sunk into the lake.

Ah Hu instructed the remaining others to stand guard, before hurriedly following Yan Zhaoge into the water.

Once in the water, headed downwards, the two passed a great number of glaciers, as the surrounding icy cold water continually converged towards the small metal plate in Yan Zhaoge's hands.

Enveloped by the ice-blue light, that small metal plate actually started gradually restoring itself.

A light smile surfaced on Yan Zhaoge's face. The next moment, the massive black figure before him flickered, as it began to move. As it got closer, he actually saw the thick tailbone of a dragon.

Landing on top of the dragon tailbone along with Ah Hu, Yan Zhaoge stabilised his figure, travelling alongside the dragon bones as they moved violently about below the surface of the ice lake.

Yan Zhaoge firmly grasped the small metal plate within his hands, accurately stabbing it into a gap where two bones

connected.

The dragon bones shuddered. From the central spinal bone, a faint white light lit up, piercing through the entire section of bones.

Yan Zhaoge extended his other hand, pressing onto the white light on the surface of the dragon bones. It was icy cold to the touch, such that he could still feel a bone-piercing chill even with his aura protecting his body.

“Change!” Yan Zhaoge silently recited within his heart as he activated a secret art, the white light on the dragon bones instantly beginning to distort.

As if forcefully drawn by a massive force, the white light began separating from the dragon bones.

Beside him, Ah Hu had long since been prepared. He flashed out a large piece of ice-blue Profound Jade, passing it over to Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge grasped the dragon bones with one hand while holding onto the Profound Jade in the other. Very quickly, a white light began gradually emanating from the Profound Jade, a dragon’s roar sounding from within.

The Glacial Dragon Bone Soul began being drawn out from the bones of the dragon in an unceasing flow, before, through Yan

Zhaoge, it was sealed within the ice-blue Profound Jade again.

Yan Zhaoge's expression was normal, just that his face gradually became obscured by a faint layer of blue, which soon began pulsing non-stop.

Seeing this, Ah Hu heaved a sigh of relief, knowing that everything had gone smoothly. After this, his Young Master would only have to spend a little bit of time before successfully getting his hands on the precious Glacial Dragon Bone Soul.

Still, Yan Zhaoge's expression had not yet relaxed, "There was someone else, in the direction of the dragon's head, trying to draw out and obtain the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul?"

"The ones who agitated the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul and caused the earthquake; it looks like it was them as well?"

Yan Zhaoge moved his eyes to look, seeing that while the two of them were stably on the dragon tailbone, the dragon's entire body was extremely long, and extended far amongst the piles of rock at the bottom of the lake. The skeleton of the entire upper body of the dragon, its skull included, was still extended out to who knows where.

Closing his eyes, Yan Zhaoge focused his mind to connect with that of the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul, as another scene gradually began surfacing within his mind.

Many images began flickering before Yan Zhaoge's eyes at an extremely high speed.

In a vast valley, within the depths of a cave, a cold wind blew. It was similarly a world of bitter ice.

At the lowest point of the cave was a pond, so deep that it seemed bottomless.

At the bottom of the pond, having already been reduced to naked bone, was the massive skull of the Glacial Chi-Dragon, not moving as all, as if in a deep slumber.

The waters of the lake suddenly rippled, as a radiantly beautiful, refreshing young girl in a white dress suddenly appeared within it.

The girl's appearance was in no way inferior to Sikong Qing's whatsoever. Her facial features were perfect and flawless, her pair of doe eyes intelligent yet soft and vulnerable, evoking a warm, tender feeling within those who saw her.

"This is a piece of fragmented memory the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul still possesses from before, recollecting the course of events that have already passed." Still, what Yan Zhaoge took note of was the fact that the other party was evidently someone he recognised.

While they had not had any personal dealings, Yan Zhaoge had definitely not made a mistake.

The girl in question was called Meng Wan; she was a disciple of the Sacred Sun Clan.

“Interesting...” Yan Zhaoge’s pupils flared slightly.

Just a few years ago, an extremely powerful Sacred Artifact suddenly appeared within the Eight Extremities World.

This artifact was known as the Crown of Extreme Yin. While its source was unknown, its power was top class; within the Eight Extremities World of after the Great Calamity, it was the strongest of its grade of artifact that had ever appeared.

However, this Sacred Artifact was rather weird, in that even if one were a Martial Saint, he or she might be unable to preside over and activate even the tiniest bit of its power.

It was only maidens of the Extreme Yin Physique, who, after entering the Martial Scholar realm, could activate a limited amount of the power stored within.

However, this Crown of Extreme Yin was really too powerful. Even when activated by a Maiden of Extreme Yin of the Martial Scholar realm, it could already exert the power of a typical Sacred Artifact, even if it were only for a short period of time.

After having discovered the crucial secret behind this, the Eight Extremities World was instantly thrown into a frenzy, as the various Sacred Grounds all began going around searching for

young Maidens of Extreme Yin to bring back as disciples.

It was only that Maidens of Extreme Yin were rare from the start. Furthermore, they could only choose those who were of an appropriate age to begin cultivating in the martial dao?

Still, with the huge population of the Eight Extremities World, they still did manage to find a few candidates, who were respectively absorbed into the different Sacred Grounds.

The Crown of Extreme Yin was just too powerful. If a female martial practitioner in the Martial Scholar realm could already wield such a massive amount of power with it, if one of them, as a Maiden of Extreme Yin, managed to reach the Martial Grandmaster realm, the results would be totally unimaginable.

Whichever of the major powers managed to gain sole control over the Crown of Extreme Yin, the other Sacred Grounds would find it hard to accept.

Still, having an extremely great restrictive effect on the longtime enemies of the Eight Extremities World, the flame devil race, the power of the Crown of Extreme Yin was something that the Eight Extremities World had great need of.

Thus, after discussing the issue, the various Sacred Grounds decided that every once in a while, they would organise an 'Extreme Yin Bout', where all the Maidens of Extreme Yin would compete, the winner being granted the right to the Crown of Extreme Yin for the following period of time.

At the present moment, a Maiden of Extreme Yin of the Martial Grandmaster realm had not yet emerged. Thus, the Extreme Yin Bout was something that all the powers could accept, and go along with peacefully.

The various Sacred Grounds were all putting in a lot of effort in cultivating their Maiden of Extreme Yin.

Meng Wan, was exactly the Sacred Sun Clan's Maiden of Extreme Yin.

Due to her Extreme Yin Physique, the environment of the icy cold pond was quite a treasured land for her.

Still, looking at the images within the memory fragments of the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul, Meng Wan didn't seem to have entered this icy cold pond to cultivate; nor had she discovered the quiet, slumbering Glacial Dragon Bone Soul.

Her situation, seemed somewhat strange.

Not long after, within the icy cold pond which contained the dragon's skull, another person landed and appeared. As he looked, Yan Zhaoge couldn't help but sigh at the coincidence. The person who had just arrived was also someone that he recognised.

His upper body naked; hair streaming behind his back; streaks of flamelike patterns visible on his body; this was obviously none

other than Ye Jing!

HSSB 38: Collect Some Interest First

From Yan Zhaoge's point of view, from the very moment Meng Wan had entered the water, the situation had already seemed a little wrong.

There were signs which seemingly suggested that she was going to lose control and suffer cultivation deviation soon.

Now, seated in the meditative position, her entire person surrounded by icy cold pond water, bobbing up and down slightly along with it, her beautiful, clear features were tinted sometimes green, sometimes red, as the two colours flashed and interchanged intermittently.

Her eyes were tightly shut, her eyebrows clenched, as a painful look was faintly visible on her face.

Yan Zhaoge thought: As I thought, it's not for entering the pond to cultivate that she is here. Rather, it must be that her own body had met with a problem, causing her to want to use this icy pond in order to help in its suppression.

Just at this time, Ye Jing also entered the pond. He glanced at Meng Wan, a little curious.

Affected by the icy cold pond, the flamelike patterns on his body glowed bright red, as they emitted an extremely high temperature.

Opening her eyes, Meng Wan also saw Ye Jing. A startled and cautious look surfaced within her doe-like eyes.

In her current condition, all she could do was forcefully maintain her current state, keeping it at the weak equilibrium she had managed to set up. Thus, she had no means of self-defence left.

Ye Jing didn't even need to attack her; just any slight interference, and she would never be able to recover.

As if having detected Meng Wan's current state, Ye Jing didn't appear to have any intentions of attacking her. After considering deeply for a moment, he began approaching her slowly.

He gestured at Meng Wan, conveying that he did not have any ill intentions, and just wanted to help her out.

Hot as fire, Ye Jing's twin palms extended slowly outwards. Even within the depths of the icy cold pond, it was as though the heat they were emitting could still be felt.

Meng Wan blinked her eyes, biting her lips, before she too extended her palms, which perfectly met the twin palms of Ye Jing within the pond's waters.

She had an Extreme Yin Physique, while Ye Jing's current reforged fleshly body, due to special reasons, was evidently of a physique that burned as hot as fire. The two, one Yin, one Yang, just happened to be able to coexist, while possessing a mutual

suppressive effect.

While Ye Jing's current cultivation was still far inferior to Meng Wan's, at this moment, it was like a timely downpour of rain, just happening to be able to solve Meng Wan's immediate, pressing problems.

With his help, the Meng Wan who had been at risk of undergoing cultivation deviation had the aura-qi within her body gradually calm, returning to its original, peaceful state.

Seeing this scene, however, Yan Zhaoge just rolled his eyes.

“This scenario, how familiar ah...”

“What a magnificent first meeting.”

“Although he did not treat her wounds with her unclothed, while associating a few more times in the future, isn't it that many ‘ahem, ahem’ things will be going to happen to them?”

“Your luck with woman, really leaves me speechless.”

However, affected by the ripples of aura-qi, within a layer of ice at the bottom of the pond, on the massive skeleton of the Glacial Chi-Dragon, a faint white light flashed past the dragon's skull.

The Glacial Dragon Bone Soul, began gradually awakening from

its deep slumber!

The pond began to quake, the icy cold water within beginning to roil about non-stop. Within the layer of ice at the bottom of the pond, the pitch-black eye sockets of the massive dragon's skull suddenly lit up with an ice-blue glow!

A moment later, the layer of ice shattered completely, as a majestic dragon's roar resounded. The skeleton of the Glacial Chi-Dragon began emanating rays of white light.

Within the pond, it was as though a tsunami had suddenly erupted.

The pond water formed a massive whirlpool, wanting to rip everything engulfed within to shreds.

In the depths of the icy cold lake, Meng Wan and Ye Jing, palms meeting palms, were moved along by the whirlpool, as they bitterly withstood the pressure it was exerting on them.

Beneath the whirlpool, the giant skull of the Glacial Chi-Dragon stuck its head out from the depths of the pond, opening its jaws wide as it roared repeatedly.

The skeletal dragon's movements caused the entire pond to quake, its effects even spreading to the very land itself.

Now, the dragon tailbone located in the glacial valley was also

affected by this.

As time slowly passed, Meng Wan and Ye Jing gradually became accustomed to the centrifugal force caused by the whirlpool, as they began thinking of a way to extricate themselves from the situation.

Gradually, Meng Wan's body was drawn in by the skeleton of the Glacial Chi-Dragon, as she was dragged onto the dragon's skull and held tightly in place by a suction force there.

Pushing her body's profound art to its limits, streams of white light appeared on the dragon's skull, instantly beginning to infuse into her body.

Looking at this scene being played back, Yan Zhaoge realised, "Extreme Yin Physique, is really a gift from the heavens ah...As expected, she was the one who was pulling on the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul from over on that end."

Having the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul enter her body, Meng Wan's face first paled, before actually quickly recovering its original rosy colour.

His palms pressed on hers, Ye Jing had also been sucked onto the dragon's skull.

Although the whirlpool within the water was also still exerting pressure on Ye Jing, he had still managed to forcefully stabilise

himself.

Flamelike patterns were circulating about his entire body, his own secret art apparently also having been pushed to its limits.

Streams of white light, with Meng Wan's hands as a medium, also began flowing into his body.

Meng Wan did not mind; while she had the benefit of having possessed the Extreme Yin Physique since birth, it would also be difficult for her if she were to try to absorb the entire Glacial Dragon Bone Soul herself.

However, at this time, the massive body of the Glacial Chi-Dragon abruptly froze up slightly.

A ray of white light slowly surfaced on the dragon bones, piercing through its entire spine and spreading to its skull.

Following a shuddering of the white light currently being absorbed by the two, it quickly began getting weaker and weaker.

Yan Zhaoge knew full well that this was because of him and Ah Hu having arrived, and begun absorbing the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul from the dragon tailbone. The effects of this had been felt all the way over at the dragon's skull.

After stopping for a moment, the whirlpool within the icy cold pond exploded with a loud bang.

Their arms which had connected Meng Wan and Ye Jing were forcefully separated with a jolt, as the two were swept away in different directions by the resulting turbulent flow.

The memory fragment of the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul then once again clearly depicted everything else which had happened earlier.

Image after image swept past in a flash before the memory fragment finally ended, and what Yan Zhaoge was seeing came to correspond with that which currently lay before his eyes in reality.

Through his connection with the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul, Yan Zhaoge could still clearly view the situation on the other end.

The only difference was that a pair of clear pupils still as the waters of a lake now appeared before his eyes, gazing into them.

Before him was the face of Meng Wan, whose mind had similarly formed a connection with the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul.

Yan Zhaoge looked at Meng Wan calmly.

Having come to this world and learnt of the Crown of Extreme Yin, Yan Zhaoge had also come to know a very embarrassing thing.

His own Broad Creed Mountain, had no Maiden of Extreme Yin.

Not having taken a female disciple of the Extreme Yin Physique under their wing, Broad Creed Mountain was thus naturally unable to participate in the Extreme Yin Bout.

However, this didn't entail that whichever power the Crown of Extreme Yin ended up with had no relation at all with Broad Creed Mountain.

Amongst the few great Sacred Grounds, there were some with good relationships and some with bad relationships.

And it just so happened that of the Sacred Grounds, Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan had a relationship which was not all that harmonious.

Themselves not being able to obtain the Crown of Extreme Yin, for safety reasons, it would be best for the other party not to be able to obtain it at all.

Therefore, while he himself did not have any enmity with Meng Wan, as this was related to a much higher level of contest, Yan Zhaoge definitely wouldn't treat it so lightly.

Gazing over, Yan Zhaoge saw that due to the impacts it had suffered earlier, the pond was looking as though it might collapse at any moment.

The stone walls surrounding the pond broke and collapsed one by one, as its waters began rushing furiously towards some unseen

underground rivers.

Ye Jing was enveloped by the waters of the pond. As they watched, it appeared as though he was about to be swept away into an underground river.

Seeing the potential danger he was in, Meng Wan's elegant eyebrows furrowed slightly. However, while she wanted to reach out a helping hand, her body was currently being kept tightly in place by the suction force from the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul, unable to move.

With a flick of her wrist and the infusion of her aura-qi, a long damask, resembling a steel lance as it shot straight through the rapids unopposed, was extended in front of Ye Jing.

Ye Jing hurriedly grabbed the white damask. As he came into contact with Meng Wan's aura-qi, his mind wavered and blanked for a split second.

His mind also formed a slight connection with the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul.

Next, Yan Zhaoge's features appeared before his eyes.

Ye Jing's eyes instantly turned bloodshot.

“Yan Zhaoge!!!”

The flamelike patterns on his body instantly went into a frenzy, actually beginning to spread crazily to envelop his entire body.

Seeing that the icy cold pond was about to completely collapse, with Yan Zhaoge interfering from the side and her own helper Ye Jing in an unstable state, Meng Wan couldn't help but sigh silently.

Making a quick decision, she circulated her profound art against its usual flow, then, while resisting the urge to spit out a mouthful of blood, forcefully severed the link between herself and the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul, preparing to first escape before making further plans.

Ye Jing's eyes looked as though they were going to pop out of their sockets and burst as all his anger and frustration transformed into a hatred so strong that it engulfed the heavens, "Where I go, you chase me to; will you only be satisfied when you see me dead?"

"I tell you; it's not that easy!"

"You damned bastard, going after me time and time again. This vengeance, this hatred; this sky does not hold enough space for the both of us to coexist!"

Yan Zhaoge looked at Ye Jing, smiling a little coldly, "Little fella, you should rejoice at the fact that I'm not at the icy cold pond over at your end right now."

“Meng Wan did really react quickly enough, directly severing the connection as she thought to run; otherwise, I would have directly dispatched people over to the pond to block the two of your paths.”

“Still, you think that the way you are now, there is no way I can take care of you?”

“Pay up some interest first, why don’t you.”

Yan Zhaoge abruptly retracted his palm that was pressing on the dragon tailbone, and hit out with it towards the small metal plate that was wedged inside the gap where two of the bones met!

HSSB 39: A Certain Person's Piled-Up Psychological Shadows

The emotions they both felt from having been saved by the other at a crucial time, as well as having made it through a tough situation together.

Would he continue establishing a strong, stable friendship with the girl based on that?

Husband and wife returning home together; you get both the girl and the money, and begin walking on the path to success, before coming back to make trouble for me?

“Nicely thought out, but just behave and get down into that underground river for a nice drink like a nice guy would, you.”

Yan Zhaoge sneered, as he directly broke off his absorption of the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul, instead striking out at the small metal plate with his palm.

With a violent shudder of the small metal plate, the entire skeleton of the Glacial Chi-Dragon began shaking violently along with it as well.

The Glacial Dragon Bone Soul let out a long, majestic roar, at a level where it could cause one's eardrums to vibrate so much they wished they were deaf.

As Yan Zhaoge's palms left the dragon bones, his connection with the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul was severed as well.

Ye Jing as well as Meng Wan would now find it hard to once again discern the current situation over at Yan Zhaoge's end.

Just as they were stunned and at a loss as for what to do, the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul began to erupt with a huge force, the massive skeleton of the Glacial Chi-Dragon beginning to thrash its body about crazily.

A whirlpool once again appeared within the icy cold pond, as the violent waves and collapsing rocks began to descend on all over its surroundings.

The skeleton of the Glacial Chi-Dragon abruptly lifted its head, hitting Meng Wan's body straight on.

Unable to withstand its blow, Meng Wan's entire body shook, finding it hard to continue keeping ahold of her damask.

Ye Jing gave a muffled groan as, having lost the lifeline from Meng Wan, his entire person was enveloped by the pond water and swept into an underground river, his whereabouts instantly unknowable.

The sun and sky could not be seen; within the water, there was only total darkness.

Ye Jing was swept away by the currents, his entire body colliding with the stone walls of the watercourse repeatedly. He could only see stars, having lost the ability to determine where was up and where was down.

“Yan...Zhao...”

Ye Jing wanted to bellow in rage, but no sound was emitted from his mouth, as the icy cold river water whose icyness penetrated all the way down to his bones was slammed unceremoniously down his throat instead, causing the later part of his words to be forcefully shoved back in.

His body was once again riddled in wounds, but what went flying this time was not his flesh and blood, but, rather, streams of fire.

Sadly, the flames just having appeared, they were instantly quenched by the icy cold, turbulent river water.

Meng Wan had regained her senses, but there was just nothing she could do.

Within the turbulent waters of the pond, even taking care of herself was already hard. She could only stabilise her own figure after much effort, only daring to move after the flow of water had calmed down.

Within the glacial valley at the other end, Yan Zhaoge was leisurely and contented as he once again placed his palm on the

dragon tailbone, beginning to continue absorbing the remaining portion of Glacial Dragon Bone Soul that still resided within.

“What should have been a glorious, magnificent first meeting, actually ended up with him in this kind of pathetic state; I wonder how high a certain person’s psychological shadows are currently piled?”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “You think this is over, just with that? Little fella, it’s only just begun.”

“Go look around, taking direction from the intensity of the quakes. North of here, you should be able to find a cave, within which, at the lowest point, you will find a pond.” Yan Zhaoge ordered.

“The Sacred Sun Clan’s Maiden of Extreme Yin, Meng Wan, should be located in that surrounding area.

“Although Ye Jing was swept into an underground river, he should still be located within that same region. With the pond as the central point, begin expanding the radius of the search area.”

Ah Hu nodded, “Yes, Young Master.”

Yan Zhaoge continued staying at the bottom of the ice lake. As the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul was absorbed, the restless movements of the skeleton of the Glacial Chi-Dragon gradually began to abate.

Having finally finished absorbing the large amount of Glacial Dragon Bone Soul, Yan Zhaoge's hands finally left the dragon tailbone, moving to retrieve the small metal plate from the gap where the two dragon bones met, where he had wedged it in.

“Ah, thinking about it, this little plaything was actually Ye Jing's originally,” Yan Zhaoge laughed unconcernedly, “Well, I'll just consider it as a bit of interest.”

The ice-blue Profound Jade within his other hand had actually turned the shade of pure white. The figure of a dragon could faintly be seen within, its chest rising and falling.

As the roars of a dragon resounded from within, the Profound Jade seemed as though it had a life of its own, as it began jumping about independently.

Despite Yan Zhaoge's grip strength, he actually had the feeling of not really being able to grasp it firmly.

Emerging from the ice lake, Ah Hu having, by his orders, gone off to find the icy cold pond, there were still some black-clothed Martial Scholars waiting for him there.

“Leave two people here at the glacial valley to stand guard, and also notify the clan about this, so that they'll send some experts over to retrieve the skeleton of the Glacial Chi-Dragon.”

Hearing Yan Zhaoge's instructions, one of the black-clothed Martial Scholars answered, "Yes, Young Master."

Although the most valuable Glacial Dragon Bone Soul was no more, the skeleton of the Glacial Chi-Dragon could still fetch a very high price.

Yan Zhaoge left the glacial valley, headed north to find that icy cold pond.

On the way there, he infused some of his aura-qi into the piece of Profound Jade that he was holding onto, causing the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul to shudder.

In the form of a streak of white light, the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul had been roaming about the piece of Profound Jade. Now, stimulated by Yan Zhaoge's aura-qi, it instantly began surging into his body.

The strength of the power held within was such that it caused a feeling of numbness to spread.

Still, Yan Zhaoge did not take it to heart. With an inward cry, the qi ocean within his dantian began producing a clear qi. This was the Clear Qi Profound Art which was only possessed by direct lineage disciples of Broad Creed Mountain.

However, unlike for ordinary Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners, faint signs of chaos could actually be seen in the

clear qi within Yan Zhaoge's dantian.

This was a fundamental of the martial dao which Yan Zhaoge had learnt from the peak martial manual, the Peerless Heavenly Scripture, stored within the Divine Palace before the time of the Great Calamity.

All things in the world, originate from boundless, peerless chaos.

And from that boundless chaos, all things in the world can be birthed.

Stimulated by the icy qi of the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul, the mass of chaos instantly transformed into a matchlessly hot qi. After merging with the icy qi, it once again returned to its initial chaotic state.

And through this process, the aura-qi that was circulating around Yan Zhaoge's entire body, became much more forceful and domineering!

The various major acupoints within his body faintly began to show signs of an ice-blue fog residing within, in the form of an ice dragon.

In each acupoint, coiled a single ice dragon.

The thunder of dragons roared in unison, the scales on their entire body crackling as they revealed a surging power.

After having circulated his aura-qi for thirty-six major rotations, Yan Zhaoge decided to stop for the moment. He kept the Ice Dragon Profound Jade well, before once again retrieving that small metal plate.

As he looked, it was apparent that the patterns on top were no longer fragmented and incomplete. It was now possible to identify the meaning contained within the ancient writings.

“The numerous stars converge

Dragons enter the sea

The ancient, cold abyss

Reverse scale shocks moon

...”

“The Glacial Chi-Dragon, whose bones were buried here, indeed had something to do with that Glacial Dragon Martial Saint. That Glacial Dragon Martial Saint seemed to have been implicated in some abstruse mystery regarding dragons entering the sea. Are these words a clue, a message, or, perhaps, a warning?”

Yan Zhaoge shook his head as he laughed, “Interesting, interesting...”

Yan Zhaoge did not really care about the martial legacies that the Glacial Martial Dragon Saint might have left behind. However, his Sacred Artifact that had gone missing along with him, to the current Yan Zhaoge, held a very huge allure.

However, with few clues at the moment, this remained a thing for the rather far future.

What Yan Zhaoge was most interested in now was first Ye Jing's whereabouts, then that of Meng Wan, who had previously also been within the icy cold pond.

“Maiden of Extreme Yin...” Yan Zhaoge laughed bitterly, “Within the incomparably vast Heaven Domain, unable to find a single Maiden of Extreme Yin, Broad Creed Mountain's luck sure is bad indeed.”

Maidens of Extreme Yin being so rare, not every Sacred Ground possessed one.

Thus, during the previous two Extreme Yin Bouts, Broad Creed Mountain had only been able to stare silently by the side, watching the representatives from the other powers slug it out, the winner taking the Crown of Extreme Yin into her possession.

This caused Yan Zhaoge to feel very unhappy.

While he did not have that much of an understanding towards the Crown of Extreme Yin which had only appeared in this world following the Great Calamity, amongst the precious secret manuals that had been stored within the Divine Palace before then had been a peak martial art which female martial practitioners of the Extreme Yin Physique were especially suited to train in, an art which was definitely superior to all the other such arts that now

existed within the Eight Extremities World.

If Broad Creed Mountain had such a disciple, even if that disciple possessed the most ordinary of talents apart from her Extreme Yin Physique, Yan Zhaoge would also have full confidence in raising that disciple up to compete for the Crown of Extreme Yin.

However, one cannot make bricks without straw; without even a single suitable candidate, there was nothing he would be able to work from, and anything he said would, therefore, also be meaningless.

Yan Zhaoge rolled his eyes, his body tensing with phantom aches at it all.

HSSB 40: The Lin Family Maiden Leaves Seclusion

In the Central Heaven Region, where Broad Creed Mountain's headquarters were located, within the depths of the multiple mountains existed an enormous cave, a peaceful place within which disciples of Broad Creed Mountain opted to go into secluded meditation.

The stone door outside the cave, which previously been closed, suddenly began to open little by little.

From within, a maiden of only fifteen or sixteen years of age stepped out. Dressed completely in white, her beauty cast a radiant glow onto the surrounding forest, as she resembled a water lily blossoming in the evening.

Outside the cave, there were two youths waiting. Upon seeing the young maiden, smiles appeared on their faces: "Junior apprentice-sister Lin is leaving the gate?"

Lin Yushao gracefully laughed as she greeted the two: "Senior apprentice-brothers."

The two youths returned her greeting. One of them laughed and responded: "Congratulations to junior apprentice-sister Lin for making a breakthrough during your seclusion. If you can complete a few tasks for the clan, you'll soon be able to wear a blue qingpao."

According to Broad Creed Mountain's rules, all normal disciples would have to wear white robes. Of the previous Ye Jing, Lan Wenyan, and Lin Yushao, none were exempt from this rule.

For innately gifted disciples, after their cultivation reached a certain realm, they would be rigorously tested by the clan. If they passed, they would wear blue robes instead, and, being considered Chosen amongst the disciples, would be nurtured by the clan, like Sikong Qing.

At a level above that, like Yan Zhaoge, their robes would be lined with a black trim. Any disciples at this level would be considered core disciples of the clan, and would have a greatly different position from the other disciples. Each core disciple would wield considerable influence—correspondingly, while their privileges and prestige could be considered the highest, their numbers were also the lowest.

Lin Yushao lightly smiled and responded: "I've only cultivated for a short period, and my foundation is unsteady. I also am lacking in experience from outside training. As for becoming a blue robed disciple, I'm still a great distance from reaching that level."

"If at some later time I have a chance to travel outside the clan with senior apprentice-brothers, I hope that you can give me some pointers."

The two youths exchanged glances for a moment, then laughed. In their hearts, they were thinking: "With senior apprentice-

brother Yan acting as a strong tree to block the wind and rain for you, what sort of trial could possibly stop you?”

However, the other party was polite and deferential, without any hint of trying to exploit her connection to Yan Zhaoge. Naturally, this made the attitude of the two youths soften. Laughing, they responded: “With senior apprentice-brother Yan guiding you, there shouldn’t be a need for us.”

“Rather, if we had the opportunity to train with senior apprentice-brother Yan, that would be a fortuitous opportunity for us. At that time, we’ll have to trouble junior apprentice-sister Lin to mention our names.”

Lin Yushao lightly laughed again: “Senior apprentice-brother Yan’s experience has surpassed ours by too much. Naturally, he’ll have his own ideas.”

“Nonetheless, from the perspective of this junior sister, I would naturally hope to be able to travel alongside you two senior apprentice-brothers.”

The two youths laughed as well, but everyone present knew full well that the one to make the decision would ultimately be Yan Zhaoge. Still, with what Lin Yushao had already said, it was enough for the two of them.

Lin Yushao asked: “I don’t know if senior apprentice-brothers know, but...regarding senior apprentice-brother Yan, is he in the clan right now?”

One of the disciples shook his head: “A short while ago, senior apprentice-brother Yan went to lead a group of our fellow disciples on a mission to the Sealing Dragon Abyss near the East Heaven Region’s Eastern Tang Kingdom. Later, he stayed there for unknown reasons, and hasn’t yet returned to the mountain.”

“East Heaven Region...Eastern Tang Kingdom...” Lin Yushao became quiet for a moment as her expression briefly showed an inscrutable expression before quickly returning to normal.

The Broad Creed Mountain disciples briefly examined her for a moment, slightly hesitating before saying:

“Junior apprentice-brother Ye also went with them. From what I’ve heard, it seems as if he’s gone missing.”

Lin Yushao’s gaze shook slightly and her body stiffened as she heard him continue: “However, he seems to only have been lost. Whether he’s alive or dead is still uncertain.”

The other youth looked at Lin Yushao, then suddenly spoke in a low voice: “Senior apprentice-sister Sikong Qing also went with them. According to some rumors, after leaving the Sealing Dragon Abyss this time, there have been some changes in her attitude towards senior apprentice-brother Yan....”

Lin Yushao was silent for a moment as she processed everything, before her expression reverted to normal.

She softly said: “I hope that Ye... Junior apprentice-brother Ye will be helped by the heavens*.”

Regardless of the affairs between the two of them in the past, everyone was still ultimately part of the same clan, so what she said couldn't be considered inappropriate.

Only, the two disciples exchanged glances again, their smiles becoming slightly odd. They nodded in agreement: “Of course, we hope that the heavens will help those who are deserving.”

After the three parted ways, Lin Yushao almost seemed like a statue as she stood outside the cave, unmoving.

Only after a long time had passed did she softly sigh, finally revealing the slightest hint of anger.

After reporting to the clan elders about the progress of her secluded cultivation, Lin Yushao applied for permission to leave to clan and go to the East Heaven Region's Eastern Tang Kingdom.

That place was also her hometown.

When the Assignment Hall Elder heard her request, his expression became somewhat ambiguous, since the fact that Yan Zhaoge was currently in the Eastern Tang was common knowledge.

However, the Elder did nothing to block her request, even seeming quite open and frank when approving it.

Lin Yushao greeted everyone she saw as she always had, then returned back to her dwelling. After gathering up her belongings, she departed from the clan.

Yet, under her calm exterior, her emotions were in turmoil. Even she herself was unable to understand why she so urgently wanted to travel to the Eastern Tang Kingdom...

.....

At this moment, Yan Zhaoge was in the Luliao Mountains, waiting for the men he dispatched to report back on Ye Jing and Meng Wan.

“If they’re able to be found, then we’ll find them. Even if we fail to find them, it’s still not a big deal.” Yan Zhaoge carelessly said. “However, if you’re able to find Ye Jing’s whereabouts, don’t attack him. Finding his whereabouts will be enough—I’ll personally go to resolve this matter.”

The other people thought that Yan Zhaoge wanted to personally go just to vent his anger. Thus, they quickly responded in the affirmative.

“As for that Meng Wan...” Yan Zhaoge pondered: “Chao Yuanlong... Xiao Sheng... Meng Wan... the Sacred Sun Clan seems

to have densely occupied the region around the Sealing Dragon Abyss and the Luliao Mountains. What could they be planning?”

Where there's smoke, there's fire. Yan Zhaoge began to take an interest in what the Sacred Sun Clan was planning.

Only one thing was for certain, they hadn't come because of the changes in the Sealing Dragon Abyss. Rather, it seemed like they were searching for something.

From what he had seen, it seemed more like a personal affair of someone inside the clan rather than a mission from the clan itself.

“Young master.” At this moment, a black clothed cultivator appeared in front of Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge asked: “Whose whereabouts have you discovered?”

“The Sacred Sun Clan's Maiden of Extreme Yin's.”

Yan Zhaoge clapped his hands unworriedly: “Lead the way, let's go take a look. Also, let Ah Hu's side keep searching for traces of Ye Jing.”

It was a rare change that Meng Wan had left the clan by herself and fallen into a trap. From the looks of it, it didn't seem like there were experts from the Sacred Sun Clan laying in wait to ambush them either.

If there wasn't an opportunity, that would be that, but if there was a chance and he didn't take the opportunity to do something, Yan Zhaoge would feel as though he had no face left to return to Broad Creed Mountain.

Regarding the struggle between two Sacred Grounds, if there wasn't any third party meddling, any single Martial Saint or Saint Artifact could decide the outcome of the war— perhaps even as the most important factor.

That was even without taking into account the superiority of the Crown of Extreme Yin as compared to regular Saint Artifacts. If a Maiden of Extreme Yin equipped with the artifact was able to step into the Martial Grandmaster realm, she would be able to wield enormous power.

The only question was... if he was going to do something, to what degree was he going to do it?

...Get rid of her?

That seemed a little bit too vicious.

And after the news spread out, the entire Sacred Sun Clan would be up in arms, with the inevitable outcome of a full-out war erupting between the two Sacred Grounds.

Previously, Meng Wan had already sustained some injuries in the

icy cold pond, but were those injuries enough to ensure that she would definitely be defeated in the next Extreme Yin Bout?

Yan Zhaoge pondered as he flew through the mountains.

“Young master.” At this time, another black clothed cultivator appeared. “There’s another group of Sacred Sun Clan cultivators in the vicinity. They seem to be the same group that was with Chao Yuanlong.”

Yan Zhaoge rubbed his chin: “Now things are getting interesting.”

HSSB 41: What A Valiant Girl

After following Meng Wan's trail for a period of time, they realised that they had lost her.

While Yan Zhaoge was a little sorry about this, he still wasn't too upset by it.

Yet, not long after, his underlings sent over the news that they had once again discovered Meng Wan's whereabouts.

Yan Zhaoge and the others did not stop to think too much about it, once again setting off in their pursuit. Still, a few mountains later and some distance away, all traces of the girl had once again disappeared.

"Something's up." Having found this repetitive pattern suspicious, Yan Zhaoge said as he stopped walking, a deep look within his eyes.

One of the black-clothed Martial Scholars beside him nodded, "It seems like we're being baited and led somewhere."

Looking at the lofty, majestic mountains that loomed ahead, Yan Zhaoge mused, "An ambush? Doesn't seem like it; on our way here, we've passed by many suitable ambush locations already."

After considering for a moment, a hint of a smile surfaced at the corner of his mouth, "Well, let's go see what you're up to then."

He waved his hand, indicating for the group to break up, and the many black-clothed martial practitioners immediately scattered without a sound as they merged into the dense forest.

In the meantime, Yan Zhaoge continued on his journey through the mountains and the forests.

A while later, a black-clothed martial practitioner suddenly returned, reporting, “Young Master, near a valley about a kilometer east of here, disciples of the Sacred Sun Clan have been spotted.”

As Yan Zhaoge looked at him for confirmation, the black-clothed martial practitioner nodded, “They’re all young disciples of the Body Refinement Realm, the very ones who accompanied Chao Yuanlong into the Sealing Dragon Abyss previously.”

“Let’s have a look,” Yan Zhaoge began heading east.

Hiding their movements, Yan Zhaoge’s group stealthily and noiselessly made their way to the vicinity of the valley. They ascended one of the mountain peaks on the side, then looked into the valley.

What they saw was that at this current moment, within the valley, there was already a confrontation taking place.

On one side was a group of three people all dressed in white

robes, with the emblem of a sun tattooed on their red-bordered sleeves. They were exactly the disciples of the Sacred Sun Clan.

The three gazes were all focused on a single person. Fanned out loosely, they vaguely looked as though they could surround the other party at a moment's notice.

The other party, currently in a stand-off with them, was actually a teenage girl.

White clothes, black sword, her long, beautiful hair cascading behind her like a waterfall.

Beside the teenage girl squatted a tiny, black little hound, currently staring with a face full of caution at the three Sacred Sun Clan disciples who currently had its master surrounded.

Yan Zhaoge's line of vision fell into the short sword within the teenage girl's hand.

Jet-black as ink, under the bright rays of the sun, it actually didn't cause the reflection of any light whatsoever. It was as if it was not a metallic? object, but was, rather, black charcoal.

Even from such a long distance away, Yan Zhaoge could still feel the sharpness emanated by that pitch-black sword, as it sent a chill flowing throughout his entire body.

The teenage girl kept a firm grasp on the short sword within her

hands, not moving an inch.

While she was garbed in white, her attire differed from what one was usually seen on disciples of the Sacred Sun Clan.

However, looking at the stance with which she held her sword, Yan Zhaoge's eyebrows twitched.

“Ah, West-Tilting Heaven Incinerating Blade...”

Alongside the Heaven Striking Palm and the Sunset Thousand Illusionary Palms, the West-Tilting Heaven Incinerating Blade was one of the Seven Great Sun Arts that were only passed down amongst their direct lineage disciples. Its strength was similarly renowned throughout the entire Eight Extremities World.

This white-clothed girl, was obviously also from the Sacred Sun Clan by birth.

“Did she learn it sneakily and is therefore being pursued; or is this due to fragmentation within the clan itself?”

Feeling a bit interested, Yan Zhaoge got his black-clothed men to scatter, some of them continuing the search for Meng Wan, while others kept vigilant watch outside the valley.

Currently, the gazes of those three Sacred Sun Clan disciples were all locked on the white-clothed teenage girl.

One of them, a slightly older-looking youth, began to speak, “Junior apprentice-sister Feng, we are all just assisting senior apprentice-brother Xiao. Apologies if we’ve offended you.”

The white-clothed teenage girl laughed, “However much talk, it’s all useless. Looks like you have no intention of letting me pass. In the end, it’ll all still depend on whose trump cards turn out to be stronger in a real contest of strength.”

Resembling bullets being shot out consecutively from the barrel of a gun, the girl’s words flowed out at an extremely high rate, yet cut down as cleanly as a knife, as every single one of them was conveyed across perfectly clearly.

While being encircled by strong enemies, her expression did not change, as she continued speaking and smiling as though all was right with the world.

Another Sacred Sun Clan disciple, one who was slightly younger this time, laughed, “Letting you pass is something that we obviously won’t do. Still, it’s not like there’s really a need for us to fight, is there?”

“It’s true that you, senior apprentice-sister Feng, are already in the Martial Scholar realm, but that is already a thing of the past.’

“Now, with your old wounds yet to recover, and new ones on top of them as well, you are unable to draw on your aura-qi, and even your inner qi is weak. With not even half of your actual strength

left, don't waste any pointless effort struggling about anymore."

"Just be a good girl and follow us back to see senior apprentice-brother Xiao, won't that do? Otherwise, if we do really get into a fight, you would probably sustain even more injuries. And how could we bear to see that happen?"

Yan Zhaoge smiled a little from his place by the sidelines. While the three Sacred Sun Clan disciples looked to be holding the absolute advantage, the West-Tilting Heaven Incinerating Blade was ferocious and violent. If the girl really went all out, they were also worried about being inflicted with injuries themselves.

Being able to destroy the opponent's will to fight would obviously be ideal.

At the very least, with the signal already having been sent out, just through the delaying of time alone, the other members of the Sacred Sun Clan would be arriving here soon. At that point in time, capturing the teenage girl before their eyes would be as easy as the flipping of a palm.

From Yan Zhaoge's point of view, the girl was actually a rare beauty. While she could not match up to the stunning looks of Meng Wan, and also lacked Sikong Qing's elegant beauty, she was, at the very least, still on par with Lin Yushao.

She had an egg-shaped face, soft facial features and sharply defined eyebrows. Her nose was obviously a little big, though, a little lacking when placed alongside the rest of her beauty.

However, what was most striking were her pair of eyes, which exuded a valiance seldom seen amongst those of the fairer sex.

Unlike Meng Wan, Sikong Qing and Lin Yushao who had already been strikingly beautiful from the first glance, this was a beauty who grew on one's eyes the more one looked at her.

As he observed closely, he thought that, maybe, her looks weren't actually inferior to those of Meng Wan and Sikong Qing after all.

It was just that from this girl's eyes, Yan Zhaoge could also see an extraordinarily strong killing intent which far exceeded the norm alongside that valiance.

That jet black sword of hers, had truly seen blood.

The teenage girl laughed, "What are you waiting for; just come over and get me then, why don't you? Acting tough but so weak inside; it's three against one, and you still have to be so cautious?"

She looked laughingly at the Sacred Sun Clan disciple opposite her, "A silver spearhead that is really made of tin; looks good but is actually worthless."

His expression changing slightly, that Sacred Sun Clan disciple snorted.

Then, staring at the girl, his smile slowly turned sinister, “I suppose senior apprentice-sister Feng must have lacked men these past days?”

“But what I don’t know is: how did you take care of your needs then? Don’t tell me that you’ve been using that black dog by your feet? No wonder you’ve always kept him by your side.”

“Still, doing it with a dog, it must have been much too tough on you, senior apprentice-sister. Do you want me, your junior apprentice-brother, to lend you a hand?”

Hearing this, the girl was not flustered in the least, as she just said in a slow and leisurely manner, “Too bad, you guessed wrong. My Little Meaty, is female.”

The small black dog by her feet yelped twice, as it gazed ferociously at that Sacred Sun Clan disciple.

Still, if one closely looked, there was indeed a lack of something hanging from its groin.

The girl said at her own relaxed pace, “As for that little toothpick of yours, junior apprentice-brother, you can just forget about it. Even if you snapped it into two then placed the two halves side by side, they would still only be as thick as two toothpicks. Whichever girl it is; it’ll never cut it.”

Hearing her words, the Sacred Sun Clan disciple’s face instantly

paled with anger.

Another of his cronies by the side snorted as he gazed at the girl with a disgusting look on his face, “Senior apprentice-sister seems so familiar with junior apprentice-brother Cai’s sizes; looks like you must have had some personal experience with it ah.”

“I guessed it,” the girl laughed dismissively, “As for whether I was right or wrong, this junior apprentice-brother Cai can just take off his pants now and let us have a look; won’t we all know for sure then?”

That junior apprentice-brother Cai and his current urgent need to explain himself lest he fall victim to a heart attack aside, even the bystander Yan Zhaoge was currently stunned, and at a total loss for words.

Young lady ah, while it is said that female practitioners should not be too mindful of formalities, your current behaviour right now... there’s an 80 percent chance that it’s because you are young and inexperienced in that area, while the other 20 percent...also has something to do with you being young and inexperienced.

How valiant, competing against men in the area of who is more ‘corrupted’...Yet, how is that suitable?

The disciple surnamed Cai had his embarrassment turn into rage, as he walked towards the girl with an ugly smile on his face, “Whether or not I really am a toothpick, you’ll know it later!”

Raising her eyebrows, the teenage girl said calmly, “This junior apprentice-brother, you can actually just stay at your current position.”

“Because I, your senior apprentice-sister, will be going over!”

Before her words had even landed, a sword-light had already flashed!

It was like the sun had suddenly been made to tilt toward the west, before it began plummeting down in that direction!

Where the sword light flashed, it looked as though the very heavens and the very earth were about to be incinerated on the spot!

HSSB 42: A Sword-Light Flashes, Momentous Events Occur!

White hands like jade, black sword like ink.

What arose, though, were great golden waves, resembling the blazing heat rays of the sun.

The sun was no longer hanging high in the sky. Rather, having slid down in a magnificent yet graceful arc, it now descended from the sky, incinerating the land all around!

The cold sword light instantly caused the three Sacred Sun Clan disciples to experience a suffocating feeling, as they fell into a panic.

“With such a huge drop in her cultivation base, having sustained such serious injuries, while also unable to fully unleash the power of that artifact, how could the power of her blow be so fierce and domineering?”

From the vantage point of the mountain ridge, Yan Zhaoge’s eyes shone, “She does have some ability.”

When she was not moving, so be it. Once she did move, though, just from that single move, Yan Zhaoge could already tell that the battle was already as good as over.

This girl, being clearly injured, shouldn't be able to exert the original power of her cultivation base at all.

Ignoring a Martial Scholar's aura-qi which would already be impossible to draw on, even her inner qi should be weak to the extreme.

Of the three major stages of the Body Refinement realm, the body-tempering stage, the meridian-connecting stage and the qi-directing stage, she should only be able to, at most, exert a level of power just equivalent to the early qi-directing stage.

And the three opponents before her, were also all at the early qi-directing stage.

Even so, going one against three, the victory was still going to go to this teenage girl.

While she had once been a Martial Scholar, far exceeding these three opponents in terms of experience and discerning ability, being able to win with such ease, this girl's comprehension and grasp over the martial arts she cultivated in obviously far, far exceeded that of her opponents.

Just from that one blow of her sword, Yan Zhaoge could already be certain that if both of them were in the same cultivation realm, even Xiao Shen might not be a match for her.

“When did the Sacred Sun Clan produce such an outstanding

disciple?” Yan Zhaoge stroked his chin, “From the looks of it, she’s just seventeen, eighteen years of age.”

The three Sacred Sun Clan disciples each also possessed an artifact.

Now that they were all in the Body Refinement Realm, they were all similarly unable to unleash the full power of the artifact they had in hand.

Yet, the girl’s black short sword just seemed to be able to flout that principle, as it easily pressured her opponents’ artifacts by a head.

Where the sword-light moved, the winds billowed and the clouds surged, a thunderbolt rocked the land, and the sun began tilting westward!

In the blink of an eye, the three Sacred Sun Clan disciples had already been defeated.

Wielding the black short sword, the teenage girl stood before them, her laughter as light as the clouds and as gentle as the wind, “I said it before; you could actually just have waited in your original position.”

That Sacred Sun Clan disciple surnamed Cai cried in fear, “You dare to harm us? Senior apprentice-brother Xiao and the clan would never let you get away with it!”

“With your Grand Master, and now also your Master dead, there’s no one who can protect you anymore!”

The girl’s entire body shook.

The smile on her face instantly vanished, as she stared at him, asking, “You say something happened to my Master? Who did it!”

Junior apprentice-brother Cai snorted, “Earlier, when a group of Flame Devils attacked the East Sea on a small scale invasion, your Master just happened to be on her guard duty shift. During the ensuing conflict, she was killed by those Flame Devils.”

“Now do you get it? Your backers are all no more now. Be obedient and quickly let yourself be captured if you know what’s good for you; otherwise, you’ll have your share of bitterness to taste!”

The teenage girl breathed in deeply, her expression returning to normal before she turned to look at the trio once again, “You all don’t understand ah. It was not that my Master was protecting me; rather, she was actually protecting you.”

A shocked expression appeared on the trios’ faces. Without even giving them any time to react, a sword-light flashed abruptly!

Junior apprentice-brother Cai’s perfectly good head was sent flying into the horizon, leaving the other two staring, wide-eyed,

speechless, tongue-tied.

The teenage girl said mildly, “These past two years, the two of you, along with those others of our clan, have chased after my life numerous times. Having defeated you, though, it was not just once that I spared your lives, often exposing my own trail in the process, creating a whole lot of danger for myself out of nowhere.”

“While fighting off the lot of you, because of not dealing the killing blow, there were many occasions where, instead, I actually caused myself to sustain some completely needless injuries.”

“You think I am a merciful and soft person? Ever since having escaped from the clan, I have roamed these lands alone. On a road full of twists and turns, the people I’ve killed far exceed the total number of people the three of you have killed in this lifetime, combined.”

“But the only people I’ve never killed have been those from our clan. Due to that, did you think I was afraid of openly going against and defying the clan?”

“What a joke. Ever since that day, our relationship had long passed that point!”

The teenage girl said, as, with yet another blow of her sword, another life was claimed, “Me not killing you was only out of consideration for my old Master back in the clan, I not wanting to make things difficult for her.”

“Now that Master is no longer of this world, I no longer have anything holding me back.”

“This Sacred Sun Clan, I’m rebelling against it!”

The third sword-blow landed, yet another decapitated head landing on the ground!

“At most, when I’m dead, I’ll still have you in the Yellow Springs to carry my coffin for me!”

Having just executed three people one by one right on the spot, the expression on the teenage girl’s face did not change, as she kept her black short sword, before turning to look indifferently at the corpses of her fellow clan members before her.

A sadness gradually began showing in her eyes, not for the three people before her, but for her late Master.

“The Sacred Sun Clan is indeed not easy to rebel against; most of the time, the path it leads to is one of certain death.” A voice suddenly rang out by her ear.

Startled, the girl turned. Now, she saw that a youth, a black-trimmed blue robe worn over his white clothes, had appeared before her.

“Someone from Broad Creed Mountain...The Broad Creed Young Master Yan Zhaoge?”

The girl regained her composure very quickly. Portraits of Yan Zhaoge were widely circulated around the Eight Extremities World, thus allowing her to identify him quickly.

Yan Zhaoge smiled lightly, “I don’t know what laws of the Sacred Sun Clan you have flouted, for you to have been pursued like this. Still, I know that if it was only considered a little squabbling between members of the junior generation before this, from now on, what you will be facing will be the spears and axes of the true experts.”

“Right; you already know who I am, but I still don’t know how I should address you.”

The girl nodded her head gracefully, “My name is Feng, Feng Yunsheng.”

Yan Zhaoge tilted his head slightly, as he looked at her, “Haha, good name. A sword-light flashes, momentous events occur; your name suits you well.”

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, Feng Yunsheng got straight to the point, “I wonder what Senior Brother Yan’s intentions are?”

“If you intend to capture me and hand me over to the Sacred Sun Clan, considering your cultivation, I wouldn’t be able to escape from you. Still, I wouldn’t go down without a fight, even if in doing so, I would only be intensifying my own eventual humiliation.”

“If you don’t intend to capture me; well, I myself wish to seek asylum in Broad Creed Mountain. What do you think are the chances of that going through?”

Taking in disciples who had betrayed their own clan, was not a minor matter.

Even though the relationship between Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan had all along been poor, even they would not do such a thing which might even spark a war between the two Sacred Grounds.

Feng Yunsheng also understood this principle, “Excuse my thick-skinned self-praise, but after having recuperated from my injuries, I would also count as possessing a high potential in the area of the martial dao, thus being a seed worth raising. At the very least, I wouldn’t be any inferior to Xiao Shen or Chao Yuanlong.”

“Regarding my insider information on the Sacred Sun Clan, while not much, I can still provide your clan with some bits of it. However, the remaining are off-limits, especially those related to my martial skills; forgive me for not being able to divulge them. While my Master is already dead, I believe that such a thing is something that she, bless her soul, would not want me to do.”

“Still, the information which I can provide is still somewhat valuable.”

While Feng Yunsheng was a fast talker, the words emerged from

her mouth clearly and distinctly, and in a very organised manner, “I do know that the chips I have on hand are limited, therefore not daring to hold too much expectations on the matter. Still, if you, Senior Brother Yan, don’t capture me, and Broad Creed Mountain also has no ill intentions towards me, could you just take it as though you never saw me and allow me to leave?”

Hearing her out somewhat interestedly, Yan Zhaoge laughed, “Interesting. Well, since you were so forthright with me, I will also not beat around the bush.”

“You yourself have also said that the chips you have on hand are limited. Due to that, if you want my clan to take you in and hold off the pressure of the Sacred Sun Clan for you, the possibility of that happening is not high.”

“At the very least, if you want the clan to accept you without any fear of the consequences whatsoever, Feng Yunsheng, is just not worthy enough.”

Smiling, Yan Zhaoge glanced at Feng Yunsheng once more, “However, if it were Feng Muge making the request, perhaps it would be a different story altogether.”

Feng Yunsheng fell silent for a time before finally answering, “Before escaping from the clan, Feng Muge was already Feng Yunsheng.”

HSSB 43: What They Say Doesn't Count

A girl surnamed Feng, of about her age. After sifting through his memories for ages, Yan Zhaoge finally managed to recall a vague piece of information related to this.

The Sacred Sun Clan was the first Sacred Ground to have discovered the method with which to control the Crown of Extreme Yin. At the same time, it had also been the first to begin searching for and gathering Maidens of Extreme Yin.

At first, the Sacred Sun Clan stringently sealed all news regarding this matter, prioritising keeping it a secret.

Even the other clans of the Sacred Grounds were unable to gather any specifics regarding the Sacred Sun Clan's Maidens of Extreme Yin.

Even after having searched for a long time, the valuable reports they had managed to obtain were still woefully few in number. Of these, there was one particular piece of information that had not actually been verified.

The Sacred Sun Clan's Maiden of Extreme Yin, was a female disciple called Feng Muge.

Sadly, other than the name itself, no other valuable piece of information related to that person had been successfully gathered, her facial features and characteristics even more so being a total mystery.

However, close to two years ago, during the very first Extreme Yin Bout, it had been Meng Wan who had made her debut.

After that, the rumours regarding a Feng Muge had been thought to be a smokescreen thrown by the Sacred Sun Clan itself.

Still, looking at the Feng Yunsheng currently standing before him, he couldn't help but link the two together.

If it were a Maiden of Extreme Yin who would be able to help to represent Broad Creed Mountain in the fight for the Extreme Yin Crown, the value of such a person would be worlds apart from a mere Sacred Sun Clan disciple who had betrayed her own clan.

The value of objects lie in their rarity. While the Sacred Sun Clan had Meng Wan, up to now, Broad Creed Mountain had never had a Maiden of Extreme Yin.

“Before escaping from the clan, Feng Muge was already Feng Yunsheng.”

However, hearing Feng Yunsheng's words, and looking at the expression on her face, Yan Zhaoge's heart instantly sunk slightly.

The meaning of the other party's words was obviously not that she had cut off her past ties and bid the Sacred Sun Clan farewell, before leaving it for good.

“Something went wrong with your Extreme Yin Physique?” Yan Zhaoge frowned as he asked, “Before escaping from your Sacred Sun Clan, you had already lost it?”

Thinking about it again, there was indeed a high possibility of this having happened. Otherwise, the Sacred Sun Clan also wouldn't have allowed a Maiden of Extreme Yin to be roaming the outside world alone as she liked.

Even though they already had Meng Wan, they still couldn't tolerate the possibility of Feng Yunsheng throwing in her lot with one of the other prominent clans.

On the contrary, even while already possessing Meng Wan, they would still put in a lot of effort in grooming Feng Yunsheng.

The fact that Feng Yunsheng was herself extremely talented in the martial dao aside, being at the very least quite likely to eventually reach the Martial Grandmaster realm, just their simultaneous possessing of two Maidens of Extreme Yin alone would only make the Sacred Sun Clan happier, despite the corresponding increase in the already huge expenditure of resources that would entail.

With the pressure from the major world of the Flame Devils weighing down on them, as well as considering the limited number of Maidens of Extreme Yin in existence, the Extreme Yin Bout had not set the restriction of each Sacred Ground only being able to send out a single representative.

To the Sacred Sun Clan, with Feng Yunsheng alongside Meng Wan, it would be like having bought a double-layered insurance.

Having regained her former ease of expression, stemming from an ability to not linger on matters best not put to heart, Feng Yunsheng laughed, “If Feng Yunsheng were still Feng Muge, even if my old Grand Master had not passed on from this world, Xiao Shen would also not have dared to mess around with me, and all the events which followed would also not have happened.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, “Indeed, you are the one Xiao Shen, Chao Yuanlong and the others have been looking for. You entered the Sealing Dragon Abyss previously?”

Feng Yunsheng said frankly, “That’s right. In order to conceal my traces and get rid of my pursuers, I did hide in the Sealing Dragon Abyss for a period of time. Of the wounds that are on me now, a few of them were actually inflicted there.”

“How did you lose your Extreme Yin Physique?”

“Once, while out tempering myself, I got too close to the outskirts of Hell and accidentally stumbled into an Evil Yin Ground. The excessive Yin caused a backlash, damaging my body’s meridians and physique.”

Although Yan Zhaoge’s question was directed at her most painful scar, Feng Yunsheng’s expression didn’t change in the slightest.

‘At that time, I had already realised that something was wrong. Upon returning to the clan, I discovered that the Yin power within my body was fading away slowly and unceasingly, till it finally vanished for good.’

Feng Yunsheng laughed in a self-ridiculing manner, a hint of disgust within her gaze, “At that time, Grand Master had just passed away not long ago, but I just had to go and lose my Extreme Yin Physique then.”

“Seeing this, Xiao Shen actually came up with the notion of taking advantage of me. In the end, he was heavily injured by the body-protecting treasure my Grand Master left me.”

“Flying into a rage, his grandfather distorted the facts, claiming that I, having failed to seduce Xiao Shen successfully, had my embarrassment turn into anger, thus launching a sneak attack on him. He wanted to kill me to vent his anger.”

“Luckily, I received this piece of news before trouble came knocking. With my Master secretly helping me from the side, I managed to escape from the clan successfully.”

Looking rather interestedly at Feng Yunsheng, Yan Zhaoge suddenly laughed, “Oh? What if what Xiao Shen claimed was actually the real truth? Perhaps what you’re saying now is actually all part of your plan to swindle me by making it look like you’re innocent when you’re actually not?”

Feng Yunsheng gave an easy laugh, “If I really were to take the

initiative and chase a man myself, I also wouldn't find that Xiao Shen ah. Huang Jie I'm not so sure about, not having had much contact with him; but isn't senior apprentice-brother Tang much stronger than him?"

Yan Zhaoze shrugged his shoulders, smiling but keeping his silence.

If logic really completely stood on Xiao Shen's side, the clan would long since have dispatched experts to capture Feng Yunsheng and bring her back. It wouldn't make sense for her to only have been pursued by Xiao Shen and a few other similarly-aged young disciples of the clan who kept a rather close relationship with him.

While Xiao Shen's grandfather was the Sacred Sun Clan's Grand Elder, he was still far from the point of being able to obscure the heavens with a single wave of his hand, dictating everything without opposition.

While Feng Yunsheng's Grand Master had already passed away, the Sacred Sun Clan still naturally had Xiao Shen's grandfather's rival keeping him in check.

Still, about standing for Feng Yunsheng and clearing her name, that person might not actually bother doing that.

Xiao Shen and Feng Yunsheng had had a private conflict, which, lacking witnesses, could only be accounted for through their own testimonies.

While Feng Yunsheng had not even had her skin broken by Xiao Shen, the latter had evidently been heavily injured by her.

“Today, I betrayed the Sacred Sun Clan, moreover even killing these three. The clan will definitely not let this matter rest so easily.”

Feng Yunsheng said calmly, “My clan has always leaned towards the grandson of its Grand Elder up to now, rather than the me who has lost my Extreme Yin Physique.”

“Your clan giving up on me, would also be completely normal. I only hope that Senior Brother Yan will not keep me against my will, and will instead allow me to leave as I would like.”

“While the pursuit of the entire Sacred Sun Clan should indeed be scary, I will just die at most; also, there’s no saying that I won’t actually strike it lucky and somehow manage to make it out of this whole situation alive.”

“Even without the Extreme Yin Physique, I still have the sword within my hand. If there’s a chance, I’ll give it a try; if there’s no chance, even more so then I’ll have to give it a try.”

Yan Zhaoge did not speak, only appraising her closely.

Feng Yunsheng frowned slightly, but, not seeing any perverted intentions behind his gaze, let him go on.

Still, if she were to remain here for much longer, the other Sacred Sun Clan disciples searching for her might soon stumble across this place and discover her.

As long as Yan Zhaoge did not speak, though, she would be unable to take her leave.

Feng Yunsheng shook her head, as she searched through the belongings of the three corpses next to her and robbed them clean.

Then, she brandished the jet-black short sword within her hand, drawing on the meagre amount of inner qi still available to her to unleash the power of her weapon.

The spiritual qi released by her artifact turned into an actual blazing fire, landing on the three corpses before burning strongly to consume them completely.

Yan Zhaoge suddenly moved, grabbing her wrist.

Feng Yunsheng was not embarrassed. Still, she raised her eyebrows, looking straight at Yan Zhaoge silently.

Yan Zhaoge ignored her as he fell into deep thought.

After a moment, the corner of his mouth revealed more than a hint of a smile, “Feng Yunsheng, might not actually be unable to go

back to being Feng Muge.”

Feng Yunsheng was momentarily stunned, “Back then, it was our Sacred Sun Clan’s Clan Chief himself who made the judgment. All the other peak practitioners of the clan who were not in the midst of secluded cultivation, also...”

“What they say doesn’t count,” Yan Zhaoge said dismissively.

Feng Yunsheng opened her mouth, yet, as she stared at Yan Zhaoge, was unable to speak for a long time.

A long time later, a bitter smile appeared on the teenage girl’s face for the first time, “It seems like you are even more confident than me, huh. Well, although I don’t know where your confidence stems from, if I were to successfully recover my Extreme Yin Physique, as the beneficiary, of course I would be happy.”

“Senior Brother Yan’s meaning is that Broad Creed Mountain can accept me? Still, I’d like to know; to what extent can you speak for your clan on this matter?”

Smiling, Yan Zhaoge was just about to speak, but then his ears twitched slightly.

Outside the valley, the figures of the black-clothed martial practitioners acting as his guards flickered, as they converged towards him.

Someone was nearing the valley, a hostile person, whose cultivation was not ordinary!

Very quickly, a white-robed youth strode into the valley. With a large beard hanging down from his face, it was obviously Xiao Shen himself!

HSSB 44: Suppression Of Realms, Martial Arts

Stepping into the valley, as Xiao Shen's gaze fell across Yan Zhaoge and Feng Yunsheng, his eyes instantly narrowed into slits.

A cold light flickered within his narrowed eyes, as venomous as a snake.

Even his rough voice could not shake off a feeling of unpleasant coldness, "Good, good; I've really not made a wasted trip today. On the same day, at the same place; I've met up with the both of you at once."

On Xiao Shen's very bearded face, an icy cold smile appeared.

Yan Zhaoge tilted his head, appraising Xiao Shen all over, "With such a big-bearded face, I always find it a little...uncomfortable looking at you, though I can't say for sure why."

Hearing his words, the muscles by the corners of Xiao Shen's eyes twitched, "Yan Zhaoge, do you still remember what I said then? For us, there are many more days ahead."

"Still, I hadn't thought that this day would come so soon."

Xiao Shen's gaze turned towards Feng Yunsheng, as his tone suddenly darkened, "Junior apprentice-sister Feng, to you, I also

said this before: There's no way you'll be able to escape."

Feng Yunsheng replied nonchalantly, "From the looks of it now, you were indeed injured pretty badly that time."

Xiao Shen stared at Feng Yunsheng, "Junior apprentice-sister Feng, I knew before that you are not afraid of death. Now that I think about it, it is indeed, and perhaps even more, so."

"Still, don't be in too much of a rush to die. I will let you know that in this world, there are many fates worse than even death itself."

"And at this present moment, standing in front of me, your living or dying is no longer something that you have any control over."

Xiao Shen's voice suddenly became much gentler, while emanating a bone-piercing chill, "Believe me; however you try to end yourself, it will never succeed."

Feng Yunsheng smiled slightly. Her current cultivation base had been restricted to the Body Refinement Realm, while Xiao Shen was already in the late outer aura Martial Scholar realm.

The distance between the two was indeed to the point where she wouldn't be able to die even if she really wished to.

However, her hand grasped the sword within it even more tightly, her face showing no sign of fear whatsoever, "Xiao Shen,

you should be thanking me instead, for having helped to rid you of your greatest weakness.”

“Haven’t you felt that over these past two years, you have been improving much more quickly in your cultivation than before?”

Xiao Shen’s gaze darkened even more, “You are still so piercingly sharp-tongued, I see. Good, that’s also what I like the most about you.”

“Shortly, we’ll have enough time to slowly reminisce on the past together.”

“You don’t actually believe that the person standing next to you can protect you, do you; therefore being so relaxed and unafraid? In that case, your vision would really be much too inadequate.”

Hearing his words, Yan Zhaoge snorted out a laugh, “The Sacred Sun Saint puppet which you yourself shattered, is watching you from the heavens.”

Hearing this, Xiao Shen was not enraged, as he nodded instead, “Not bad, Yan Zhaoge, you do possess some ability.”

“I must admit; I underestimated you in the past.”

“However, don’t think that having managed to gain a bit of an advantage over me before, you can be considered to have defeated me. That would be too much of deceiving yourself along with

others.”

While saying this, as his body stood unmoving in its original position, it also began emanating a forceful aura.

As the aura was externalised, a faint metallic lustre flickered, getting brighter and brighter by the second.

In that moment, the area surrounding Xiao Shen’s body seemed like it was being enveloped by a circular golden halo.

The next instant, rays of golden light flew out, circulating between the heavens and the earth, resembling innumerable golden swords formed from sunlight.

The golden rays of light instantly travelled a distance of a hundred paces, passing behind the bodies of Yan Zhaoge and Feng Yunsheng.

Where the piercing sound resounded, these golden light rays had either pierced into the mountainside or the surface of the ground, causing the entire valley behind Yan Zhaoge to be riddled with hundreds and thousands of deep holes.

The golden light rays stayed embedded within the mountainside and the ground, not dissipating for a long time.

It was as if a ring of real weapons, formed into a semi-circular formation, had Yan Zhaoge and the other surrounded and trapped

within its midst.

The group of black-clothed martial practitioners behind Yan Zhaoge all frowned.

Being able to freely remain a hundred paces away from a Martial Scholar's body, also having achieved tangible form, aura-qi could then take the form of qi-based weaponry.

Whether in the area of offence or defence, it was still at a level higher than the externalised aura of early outer aura Martial Scholars.

It was exactly the signature of mid outer aura Martial Scholars.

Having taken tangible form, the mass of aura-qi would be able to perform long-ranged attacks. Travelling a distance of a hundred paces in but an instant, he or she would be hard pressed to escape.

And this was still not yet over. Placing his hands behind his back, Xiao Shen's body actually impressively began leaving the ground, rising higher and higher, only stopping after having risen some way up.

With nothing beneath his feet to support him, he was actually hovering there in mid-air.

This was actually the signature of late outer aura Martial Scholars.

A more thorough refining of the aura-qi was required for this than for mid outer aura Martial Scholars. Only when they were able to control their aura-qi so freely would Martial Scholars also gain the ability to hover within the air for short periods of time, as well as move around for short distances while airborne.

While facing off against opponents not possessing this ability, Xiao Shen had, at the very least, always been able to place himself in a position where he would never be defeated.

It was easy. If he couldn't beat his opponent, he would just directly take to the air and increase the distance between them. Having done so, his opponent would only be able to stare at him helplessly.

It didn't matter even when his opponent had also already reached the point of being able to perform long-ranged attacks with qi-based weaponry. Despite the fact that the other party's qi-based weapons could also be sustained from a distance of hundred paces away, it still held true that these weapons unleashed a stronger force the nearer they were to their master.

Xiao Shen and his opponent having drawn apart, with the qi-based weapons of both sides clashing at a closer proximity to him, he would naturally hold a great advantage.

Before, using the wooden puppet as a medium in competing with Yan Zhaohe, Xiao Shen had truly been dancing about with handcuffs on, his real skills not having been put on display at all.

But at this current time, he was really revealing his power as a late outer aura Martial Scholar, which was worlds apart when compared to that of an early outer aura Martial Scholar like Yan Zhaoge.

The suppression of realms, was definitely not as simple as it sounded.

Hovering in mid-air, Xiao Shen looked down at Yan Zhaoge from a position of lofty superiority.

“Fighting you of the early outer aura stage with my late outer aura Martial Scholar realm cultivation base; you’d probably be unhappy at that. However, if you want to interfere in Feng Muge’s matter, don’t blame me for what I’ll do.”

“Even if the senior generation of your Broad Creed Mountain were here, the same principle would still apply.”

“If you intend to shelter an escaped disciple of the Sacred Sun Clan, the ensuing battle between you and me would no longer be a simple sparring contest.”

Looking down at Yan Zhaoge, Xiao Shen suddenly smiled, “It goes unsaid that I would definitely be able to beat you to death right on the spot.”

“Still, even if you don’t interfere in Feng Muge’s matter, there’ll

still be many things for me to play today.”

“It’s only that; it’s junior apprentice-brother Chao who’ll be playing with you first.”

A group of white-robed youths now also appeared within the valley. Leading them was none other than the person who had been defeated by Yan Zhaoge in the Sealing Dragon Abyss previously, Chao Yuanlong.

Chao Yuanlong let out a long breath, “Yan Zhaoge, this one wants to fight with you again.”

From around his body, dazzling rays of golden light which resembled needles shot out.

Previously in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, when Chao Yuanlong had stimulated his aura-qi, much of the earth beneath his feet had cracked and shattered.

Now, however, where he was in contact with the ground, innumerable, densely packed needle-inflicted holes were left behind, causing it to resemble the inside of an ant-nest or beehive.

The amount of aura-qi agglomerated together to form the needles of light, as well as the penetrative power they possessed, were on a completely different level than before.

At this point in time, there was actually a faint metallic lustre

flickering over the innumerable needles of aura-qi that surrounded Chao Yuanlong. Obviously, he had stably reached the outer aura Martial Scholar realm!

Feng Yunsheng looked at Chao Yuanlong, raising her eyebrows, “This was all from you leading Divine Sun Needles into your body, forcefully tempering your aura-qi, thus enabling your aura to be externalised?”

A playful expression also appeared on Yan Zhaoge’s face, “I’ve heard of it before. However, according to my memories on this, the negative side-effects of this method are such that anyone who really went and used it would be tormented by terrible pains and aches all day and all night, causing them to feel that they were better off dead. Also, their future cultivation speed would thereby be decreased greatly.”

Chao Yuanlong replied unconcernedly, “When compared to the humiliation you inflicted on me, a little pain; what does it matter?”

“If this vengeance isn’t exacted, this one isn’t human!”

Saying thus, Chao Yuanlong strode forward, directly moving in front of Yan Zhaoge!

Yan Zhaoge raised his eyebrows. Then, he flicked his right sleeve, as a green light flashed out of it like lightning.

“Coiling Dragon Sleeve, good!” Chao Yuanlong yelled loudly, as his hands shot forward abruptly.

However, it wasn't the Heaven Striking Palm.

His needle-like golden-coloured aura-qi actually turned soft and supple, as it now resembled innumerable thin threads of silk.

Just having turned flexible, the innumerable thin threads shot out, resembling thousands of snakes leaving their nest as they wrapped themselves around the green sword-light.

Yan Zhaoge's sword-light trembled as streaks of green sword-aura erupted, snapping the golden-coloured threads.

However, those threads seemed to have no end to them as they wrapped around his sword-light unrelentingly, before eventually fully eliminating the power of his sword technique.

Carefully appraising Chao Yuanlong's martial art, the corners of Yan Zhaoge's mouth twitched, as his expression also turned a little strange.

Chao Yuanlong said coldly, “This one knows that you had reached the outer aura stage even earlier than me. Yet, this one still bore the cost of the Divine Sun Needles entering my body, quickly entering the outer aura Martial Scholar realm as well.”

“It was all to successfully cultivate in this martial art specially

meant to suppress your Coiling Dragon Sleeve!”

“Today, you are a Dead dragon!”

HSSB 45: Like A Father Beating His Son!

The sword-light resembled a majestic dragon, spreading its wings in phenomenal flight.

However, there were tens of thousands of golden snakes coiling around it, keeping it wrapped up and entrapped as they continued biting at its body unrelentingly.

The green dragon would struggle and flail about, jolting snake after snake to death, but these golden snakes just seemed to have no end to them.

Gradually, the green dragon lost all of its vitality. Unable to maintain its flight, it plummeted onto the ground below, where it was promptly devoured by the countless golden snakes.

The snakes' bodies being even more flexible than the dragon's, just slithering around, they had been able to continuously dissipate much of its strength till none of it remained.

Having tempered it incessantly and painstakingly, the aura-qi that Chao Yuanlong had externalised was now completely at his fingertips; he had actually even been able to contend with Yan Zhaoge's Coiling Dragon Sleeve with it.

The green sword-light was gradually expelled, as the bamboo branch within Yan Zhaoge's hands regained its original form once more.

A shocking light erupted from within Chao Yuanlong's eyes, "Yan Zhaoge, today, even if you change your weapon to a real sword, your defeat is all but inevitable!"

"This bamboo branch of yours; this one won't destroy it. Rather, this one will leave it for you. If your face is not beaten bloody, this one's rage cannot be extinguished!"

Yan Zhaoge did not speak, only looking at Chao Yuanlong rather strangely.

Feng Yunsheng also stared at Chao Yuanlong, "The Heavenly Snake Silk-Binding Hand? That's even more non-mainstream than the Piercing Sun Needle Art, and he actually managed to master it."

As its name suggested, the Heavenly Snake Silk-Binding Hand was a soft and supple technique which possessed many variations. Able to bind opponents with silk as well as perform some subtle actions, it was one of the top martial techniques with which to skilfully capture an opponent.

Having been unwittingly obtained by some Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners, it had then been dumped in the clan's martial repository.

This was because the technique was incompatible with the Sacred Sun Clan's orthodox martial arts, requiring the martial practitioner to first reach the outer aura Martial Scholar realm and

gain the ability to externalise their aura before being able to cultivate in it.

Some martial arts indeed complemented or suppressed one another.

In cultivating this martial art, Chao Yuanlong had achieved success in one go, and it had truly worked wonders with its suppressive effect on Yan Zhaoge's Coiling Dragon Sleeve, being even better to utilise than his own clan's Seven Great Sun Arts.

Yan Zhaoge swivelled his head to look at Feng Yunsheng, "Its name is the Heavenly Snake Silk-Binding Hand?"

Feng Yunsheng looked at Yan Zhaoge who appeared as though he was trying to hold back an urge to laugh yet not really succeeding, as she nodded her head despondently.

"Haha..." Yan Zhaoge just stood there smiling at Chao Yuanlong, no longer speaking.

On seeing that smile of his, Chao Yuanlong was infuriated to the point of his breathing being affected, phantom stabbing pains emanating from the non-existent scars on his face which had actually long since healed completely.

With a piercing howl, he waved his hands, and the tens of thousands of golden snakes once more resumed their offensive.

Xiao Shen stood in mid-air, looking down on Yan Zhaoge from above, “You can switch for another, better weapon.”

“I suppose you do have a spirit artifact? Go ahead if you wish; take it out and let me have a look.”

“However, since I am here today, I can lend a weapon to junior apprentice-brother Chao if the need so arises.”

“If you believe that you can still gain an advantage on that front...”

Even before his words had landed, he saw. Standing in his original position and not moving an inch, Yan Zhaoge waited for Chao Yuanlong to get right in front of him before abruptly making his move.

Not a sword!

But a fist!

In that brief instant, the entire world turned dark.

As if the sun was being corroded, the aura-qi around Chao Yuanlong’s body roiled, the rays of the sun instantly losing their radiance.

As Yan Zhaoge thrust out his fist, his entire wrist seemed to

have turned into an enormous python with twelve pairs of wings on its massive back, the length of its body unquantifiable as it lay coiled within the boundless sea of stars.

The Heavenly Snake King!

Legend had it that this being possessed power even superior to the many dragon races!

With that one fist, Yan Zhaoge's aura-qi surged, resembling a Heavenly Snake swallowing the sun as it instantly engulfed Chao Yuanlong!

As the incomparably soft and supple force erupted, the gusting of a wind did not follow, yet it seemed as though the very sky was collapsing, the very earth breaking apart.

In the blink of an eye, the Chao Yuanlong who had been lunging towards Yan Zhaoge was knocked flying by him with a single punch, blasting off at a speed even greater than when he had come!

Xiao Shen and Feng Yunsheng were both stunned.

They could only watch as Chao Yuanlong's body flew in a long arc, before it finally lost to the effects of gravity and smashed straight down on the hard ground below. There he lay on his back like a dead fish, twitching uncontrollably, yet unable to let out a single noise.

The other Sacred Sun Clan disciples who had followed Xiao Shen and Chao Yuanlong here were once again left staring blankly and slack-jawed, at a total loss for words.

What kind of situation was this?

Hadn't senior apprentice-brother Chao already mastered a martial art specifically aimed at suppressing Yan Zhaoge's techniques?

Hadn't he said that even while Yan Zhaoge was also now an outer aura Martial Scholar, he was still absolutely certain of obtaining the eventual victory?

Hadn't he just been holding the advantage, and not just a small one at that?

How was it possible then that, in the blink of an eye, things had turned out this way?

Yan Zhaoge looked at the Chao Yuanlong collapsed on the ground a distance away, finding it funny yet also somewhat irksome at the same time, "Heavenly Snake Silk-Binding Hand; now that's why I thought it so familiar upon first hearing that name."

"It obviously stems from one of the side branches of the Heavenly Snake King Fist, one of the Six Spirits Demonic Fists."

"You only began cultivating in the Heavenly Snake Silk-Binding

Hand recently, after having managed to reach the early outer aura Martial Scholar realm. I, on the other hand, began cultivating in this fist technique of mine immediately after having come to this world.”

“Huh, my Heavenly Snake King Fist beating your Heavenly Snake Silk-Binding Hand, is just like a father beating his son.”

“And you say you aren’t here to feed?”

Yan Zhaoge retracted his fist, then spread out both his hands in a helpless gesture as he looked towards Xiao Shen, “Um, it seems like he can’t accompany me to play anymore.”

The stunned expression on Xiao Shen’s face vanished, a previously unseen seriousness now residing within his gaze with which he looked at Yan Zhaoge.

However, there was also a previously unseen iciness within it.

“They all say that the Broad Creed Young Master’s sword resembles a dragon, but apparently, that was all just a mirage. I never expected that you would have hidden yourself so deeply.”

Xiao Shen said slowly, “Sadly, you were still not smart enough, and ended up exposing your abilities too quickly. If you had kept them hidden for just a while longer, perhaps you would really have grown to be a huge threat to us.”

“Now, even if I have to bear all the responsibility for inciting a war between the two great Sacred Grounds, I really do feel a little like killing you here today.”

The coldness within Xiao Shen’s gaze skyrocketed, as the aura-qi within his entire body was completely released, causing him to resemble a huge sun.

Amidst the hundreds of kilometres between the sky and the earth, countless rays of golden light which resembled sharp blades began circling between the air above Yan Zhaoge’s head.

The pressure emitted by a late outer aura Martial Scholar was revealed in its true glory.

Ignoring Yan Zhaoge who was bearing the brunt of it, Feng Yunsheng and the others around him and even the other Sacred Sun Clan disciples as well all experienced a suffocating feeling.

Yan Zhaoge, however, just nodded his head as if nothing was up, “Not bad; of the martial practitioners at your current cultivation level, you can be considered as elite.”

Xiao Shen said mildly, “I now admit that you becoming one of the Four Young Masters was not just a mere filling up of the numbers. If our cultivation bases were at a similar level, even I wouldn’t be confident of winning against you.”

“However, currently, the distance between us is too great. If you

had reached the mid outer aura stage, perhaps you would still be able to escape from my hands.”

The black-clothed martial practitioners alongside Yan Zhaoge all fell into a deep silence.

Their Young Master had only just broken through to the outer aura Martial Scholar realm a short while ago. Although he had quickly finished the second purification of the marrows within his bones, if he wanted to make another breakthrough right away, that was really not too possible.

The crowd of Sacred Sun Clan disciples, on the other hand, all let out relieved breaths.

While senior apprentice-brother Chao had been defeated, the good thing was that they still had a senior apprentice-brother Xiao.

About there being a suppression of realms or whatnot, they also couldn't bother to care about that now.

At this time, Yan Zhaoge's line of vision was instead on Chao Yuanlong, currently being supported by some of his fellow disciples.

“I was nice and gave you a chance, thus fighting you at the same level. Never would I have thought, though, that the result would be so pathetically laughable.”

Hearing this, Chao Yuanlong's eyes opened wide.

Yan Zhaoge shook his head, "Mid outer aura Martial Scholar realm; how hard can it be?"

Saying thus, the acupoints on Yan Zhaoge's entire body began to rumble and shake. Streams of white qi could faintly be seen rising from them, resembling ice dragons soaring into the skies.

All the qi and blood within his entire body, resembling molten mercury, surged, as the metallic lustre flickering on the surface of his externalised aura grew more and more dazzling!

Yan Zhaoge randomly punched out a stance of the Heavenly Snake King Fist within the air. The roiling aura-qi began to distort and spiral, twisting into a single mass, before finally transforming into a single thick, black whip!

The black whip shuddered in mid-air, and a thunder-like explosion resounded!

Condensing qi into a weapon, a tangible, corporeal entity!

Xiao Shen's eyes nearly popped out of their sockets, "Mid outer aura stage?!"

"Impossible!"

HSSB 46: Mid Outer Aura Stage, Is Enough

Seeing Yan Zhaoge having reached the point of being able to sustain his qi from a distance of a hundred paces, also having successfully used it to manifest qi-based weaponry, the light before Chao Yuanlong's eyes was instantly replaced by darkness.

The he who had originally already been seriously injured was now no longer able to sustain his mental faculties, as he just directly fainted.

Having just lost tragically at the hands of Yan Zhaoge a second time, he had already been frustrated to the point of near madness.

Now, as Yan Zhaoge actually improved further right before his very eyes, treating rising to the mid outer aura Martial Scholar realm like as ordinary a matter as eating or drinking, Chao Yuanlong's already fragile mind collapsed completely.

This having happened, his having suffered greatly from the negative side effects of having drawn the Divine Sun Needles into his body in order to forcefully achieve a breakthrough into the outer aura Martial Scholar realm; hadn't it all been for naught?

In the Sealing Dragon Abyss, the both of them had evidently still been in the same late inner aura Martial Scholar realm. Within such a short period of time, how had Yan Zhaoge managed to consecutively break through so many bottlenecks, thus rising to the mid outer aura Martial Scholar realm?

All that had transpired during their earlier clash in the Sealing Dragon Abyss; really, had it all been an illusion?

All the other Sacred Sun Clan disciples who had also seen Yan Zhaoge's performance in the Sealing Dragon Abyss that day were also stunned like wooden chickens.

Even in the case of Xiao Shen, his body shook, as he almost fell directly from his current position in mid-air.

Your mother!

How long had it previously taken for this old man to get to the mid outer aura stage from the late inner aura stage?

Xiao Shen's eyes nearly popped out of their sockets as he didn't even want to continue down that path of thought.

Yan Zhaoge's aura-qi had taken the form of a long whip. As he lashed out with it in mid-air, a 'crack' sound resounded.

"Exposed too early? Kept my abilities hidden? Why would I have to do that?"

Yan Zhaoge said indifferently, "What can you do, even if you have already found out about it? Saying it as though you would be able to do something to me?"

“In this world, there are still many people who can defeat me, but you, Xiao Shen, are not one of them.”

With a wave of Yan Zhaoge's other arm, streams of aura-qi began agglomerating together, forming an enormous ice-blue sword in mid-air.

On the blade of the sword where a cold light was pulsing, the figure of a dragon could faintly be seen flickering.

Layers of white ice surfaced as they surrounded the sword, as it resembled an ice dragon concealed within a layer of clouds.

Xiao Shen inhaled deeply “Yan Zhaoge, you seem to have forgotten something.”

“Currently, you are still only at the mid outer aura stage.”

“Unless you can immediately pull off a breakthrough into the late outer aura stage, you will surely die today!”

After yelling thus, Xiao Shen let out an enraged howl as he descended from the sky.

Countless streaks of golden light, resembling a rain of swords, descended upon Yan Zhaoge from above.

With a wave of his hand, the ice-blue sword hovering in mid-air

began striking out continuously, resembling a divine dragon flying through the horizon as it destroyed the golden streaks of light one after another.

While the golden streaks of light were heavy, at the end of the day, Xiao Shen was still a Martial Scholar of the late outer aura stage. Each of them was incomparably dense and refined, in no way inferior to Yan Zhaoge's sword-aura.

However, every single time, Yan Zhaoge's manifested sword-aura was able to successfully target the points at which they were weakest.

The result was that even though Yan Zhaoge's manifested sword-aura was completely outnumbered, fighting one against many, it was still able to withstand the tempest of attacks from the streaks of golden light that were raining down upon it.

It was only that those golden streaks of light were but a glamoured move of Xiao Shen's.

The streaks of golden light having been shattered by Yan Zhaoge's manifested sword-aura, rather than completely dissipating upon impact, they remained in mid-air in a suffused, mistlike form.

The large amount of remnant golden light instead enveloped the entire area, within which day suddenly turned to dusk, depicting the scene of the setting sun illuminating the darkening sky.

A hint of a smile leaked from the corner of Xiao Shen's mouth. His palms now turned illusory, as he pushed out towards Yan Zhaoge.

The entire domain of golden light which had been created by his aura-qi now collapsed towards its centre all at once, slamming straight at Yan Zhaoge!

The profoundness of the Sunset Thousand Illusionary Palms was, at this moment, being displayed by Xiao Shen in a manner that far, far exceeded that time with the Sacred Sun Saint puppet!

The world before Yan Zhaoge's eyes resembled the sunset in its final moments at that split instant before the setting sun passed beneath the distant mountains, all around a scene of abject desolation.

“Ha!” With an exclamation, Yan Zhaoge retracted both his fists, drawing them back to his abdomen.

His left hand rested there stably, exerting pressure on his abdomen, not moving an inch.

His right hand, meanwhile, shook slightly, beating at his own body non-stop.

Two hands; one active, one passive; one Yin, one Yang; one deeply silent; one lightly agile. They achieved a state of perfect harmony.

The left hand displayed the Ocean Stabilising Fist of the Six Spirits Demonic Fist, transforming into the image of a Turtle Divinity.

The right hand displayed the Heavenly Snake King Fist of the Six Spirits Demonic Fist, transforming into the image of a Heavenly Snake.

The turtle and the snake overlapped. Active and passive combined; Yin and Yang united.

Within the interior of the muscles of the human abdomen, there existed the Shangqu acupoint, also known as the Door of Blood. It was the most important point within a martial practitioner's blood circulatory system.

Acting in concert with his heart and stimulating the Door of Blood, all the blood within his entire body instantly surged, seething with energy as it erupted with a previously non-existent potential.

Before the Great Calamity, it was recorded within the annals of the True Martial Fist Tome stored within the Divine Palace: 'Inside Shangqu, the Door of Blood, lives Xuanwu, the Emperor of the North!'

Two streams of qi and blood, one fast, one slow, converged upon Yan Zhaoge's Shangqu acupoint, combining into a single new entity, which resembled the chaotic elements that had been

present before the Heavens and the Earth had split apart.

The next instant, it suddenly shuddered, as a powerful force far exceeding the norm exploded from within Yan Zhaoge's body!

Two hands pushed out simultaneously.

The aura-qi within his left hand took the form of an enormous shield, resembling the Ocean Stabilising Turtle Divinity.

The aura-qi within his right hand took the form of a thick, long whip, resembling the King of the Heavenly Serpents.

The turtle and the snake overlapped, then shot forward simultaneously.

A faint, gigantic humanoid figure appeared.

The Emperor of the North, [Xuanwu](#)!

A combined attack from the turtle and the snake; the Divine Xuanwu descended!

A massive force that seemed like it could topple mountains and suppress seas pushed towards Xiao Shen, forcefully breaking through his Sunset Thousand Illusionary Palms!

Shocked, Xiao Shen's palms changed, as, drawing on the meagre rays of sunlight that still remained, he hurriedly changed from offence to defence.

The illusions formed as a result were blurry and bewildering, causing people to be unable to tell real from false, losing their sense of direction completely.

Xiao Shen's airborne figure rose up considerably higher, making good use of his levitating ability from having reached the late outer aura Martial Scholar realm before he finally managed to avoid Yan Zhaoge's blow.

He instantly broke into a cold sweat, "This is a power that mid outer aura Martial Scholars can possess?!"

Yan Zhaoge laughed, "Mid outer aura realm, is enough."

"Receive another of my blows!"

Exerting power with his foot, half of the land in the entire valley instantly broke apart as it concaved inward with a single stomp!

Making use of the backlash, Yan Zhaoge shot straight up into the sky, heading straight for Xiao Shen like a shell shot out of a cannon!

Xiao Shen snorted coldly, as, in mid-air, he leaped once more.

As quick as lightning, his entire person instantly travelled a great distance to the side, drawing apart the distance between him and Yan Zhaoge.

The Sacred Sun Clan's direct lineage martial art, as well as one of its Seven Great Sun Arts-Leap of the Rising Sun.

It was the only pure body-related art amongst the Seven Great Sun Arts. When performed, it was swift and unyielding, resembling the unstoppable momentum of the Sun rising over from the east.

Having used this art to avoid Yan Zhaoge's blow, Xiao Shen leapt once more, lunging towards Yan Zhaoge.

He wanted to grasp a chance from Yan Zhaoge's disadvantage of only being able to move vertically in the sky based on his momentum, as compared to himself who was able to continuously hover and move about horizontally and to the sides.

Lunging forward now, he had been waiting for this moment when Yan Zhaoge's initial upward momentum had just decreased to zero, when he had still yet to gain a downward momentum from the force of gravity!

A golden wheel rose, illuminating the surroundings as it smashed directly down at Yan Zhaoge!

Spirit artifact, Radiant Sun Wheel.

Xiao Shen's features were cold as ice as he unleashed his full power in one go!

However, Yan Zhaoge had long since been ready for him. The power which he had been building up within his Door of Blood now exploded out once again.

His body, which had originally already begun plummeting downwards, actually forcefully stopped in mid-air for a moment.

Yan Zhaoge unfurled his right sleeve. Instantly, a stream of green light which resembled a dragon roared as it soared into the skies!

This time, the weapon within Yan Zhaoge's hands was no longer a bamboo branch, but a dark green sword the colour of jade!

As a bright light flickered on the blade of the sword, what resounded was the majestic roar of a dragon, a roar which was not illusory, but clear and real!

Spirit artifact, Jade Dragon Sword!

Yan Zhaoge became one with his sword, soaring into the skies, piercing through the very air to instantly appear right before Xiao Shen's eyes!

Where the tip of the sword pointed, the seven stars of the northern Big Dipper converged to illuminate an expansive area as vast as the very heavens themselves!

Broad Creed Mountain's direct lineage martial art, one of its Eight Extreme Arts, the Big Dipper Sword!

Xiao Shen could only use his Radiant Sun Wheel to defend against Yan Zhaoge's Jade Dragon Sword.

However, just as he was about to relax, he saw Yan Zhaoge, wielding the Jade Dragon Sword within his right hand, suddenly extend his left hand from within its sleeve, hacking straight down at his head!

HSSB 47: Late Outer Aura Martial Scholar, Don't Just Focus On Running Away Ah!

Yan Zhaoge's left palm was dyed entirely purplish red.

As his aura-qi surged, it was as though a real clump of red-purple flames had agglomerated within his hands.

Where the flames touched, Xiao Shen's aura-qi instantly looked as though it was going to collapse and dissipate at any moment!

Under that single palm strike, he felt as though he was currently entrapped within a furnace, about to be burned to ashes by those purplish flames.

One of the Eight Extreme Arts alongside the Big Dipper Sword, Broad Creed Mountain's direct lineage martial art, the Tushita Palm!

Yan Zhaoge and Xiao Shen let out simultaneous exclamations, as on their bodies, aside from the Jade Dragon Sword and the Radiant Sun Wheel, yet more glows lit up.

In the instant that they met within the air, one precious treasure after another erupted with their domineering abilities, clashing strongly.

Looking up from within the valley, the sky was visibly shining

with lots of dazzling radiances, making for an enchanting and captivating sight.

Yan Zhaoge and Xiao Shen both had numerous precious treasures on them. They instantly exploded out with power, offence and defence merging into one.

The power of the each side's great quantity of precious treasures whittled down at each other.

But finally, Yan Zhaoge's left hand's Tushita Palm, not giving in an inch, managed to fall heavily down on Xiao Shen's body!

Xiao Shen let out a muffled groan, as, fresh blood spurting out from his nostrils, his figure tumbled backward in retreat.

The crowd of Sacred Sun Clan disciples let out alarmed cries, their faces all turning the colour of ash.

The late outer aura Martial Scholar Xiao Shen against the mid outer aura Martial Scholar Yan Zhaoge; it had actually ended with Xiao Shen's defeat!

This result was much more shocking than Yan Zhaoge having previously defeated Chao Yuanlong twice while the two had been at the same level of cultivation.

After all, Xiao Shen was not just an ordinary late outer aura Martial Scholar; this was a genius-level existence who had

surpassed levels to defeat opponents in the mid outer aura stage while he himself had only still been in the early outer aura stage!

During his clash with Chao Yuanlong in the Sealing Dragon Abyss previously, ignoring how much strength the two had possessed at the time, a single phrase from Yan Zhaoge had been enough to deter Chao Yuanlong from wanting to make use of weapons in their fight.

While fighting bare-handed, both sides being young Chosen of their generation, they would just be fighting it out based on their respective cultivation attainments. However, if they were to make use of weapons in their fights, even while Chao Yuanlong was a direct lineage genius of the Sacred Sun Clan, how would he be able to compare to Yan Zhaoge, whose father was one of Broad Creed Mountain's most prominent figures?

Xiao Shen on the other hand, was different. Like Yan Zhaoge, his entire body was full of precious treasures.

However, having been drawn in and contained by both sides' clashing of precious treasures, he had actually just been defeated by Yan Zhaoge who had even surpassed levels to do so. The difference between their levels of cultivation was clearly laid right there for all to see; it could not be talked away.

Worse was the fact that Yan Zhaoge saw bottlenecks as flimsy entities which might as well be non-existent; the gulf from the early to the mid outer aura stage was just to be crossed whenever he felt like it, as his mood dictated.

While in the Sealing Dragon Abyss previously, he had still only been in the late inner aura stage. Now, however, he was already in the mid outer aura stage. The swiftness with which he had achieved this was so exaggerated that it was something most people, if not all, would find hard to believe.

Such a Yan Zhaoge was like a high, towering mountain, causing a sense of desolation to inevitably rise up in the hearts of all who saw him.

As the airborne Yan Zhaoge descended, without any hesitation whatsoever, he threw out his right arm, the Jade Dragon Sword directly flying over toward Xiao Shen!

Xiao Shen bit his teeth as he controlled his Radiant Sun Wheel to block the Jade Dragon Sword.

The two spirit artifacts instantly began clashing.

Yan Zhaoge laughed as he looked at Xiao Shen, “Late outer aura Martial Scholar, don’t just focus on running away ah!”

Having finished his lines, he exerted strength with his feet once more, instantly travelling almost a distance of a hundred kilometres, headed straight for Xiao Shen once more!

Xiao Shen stared at him, his eyelids spread so far wide they very nearly permanently ripped themselves apart for good. Finally,

looking towards the other Sacred Sun Clan disciples, he let out a low, dispirited howl, “Let’s go!”

The bodies of the Sacred Sun Clan disciples jolted as they glanced over at Yan Zhaoge and Xiao Shen with complicated expressions on their faces, their hearts all having died along with Xiao Shen’s humiliating defeat. Carrying the fainted Chao Yuanlong who was long since dead to the world, they retreated outside the valley.

Yan Zhaoge also didn’t make things difficult for them, just focusing on that one Xiao Shen as he continued to gift him with injuries as generously as he could.

Xiao Shen dispiritedly performed a Leap of the Rising Sun, this time not for a sudden sneak attack but rather to avoid Yan Zhaoge, before finding a chance to escape.

Though his heart currently felt like it was dripping blood, and he was completely unwilling to admit it.

Things having progressed to this stage, even Xiao Shen had to admit to himself and really recognise that, he truly wasn’t Yan Zhaoge’s match!

The him of the late outer aura Martial Scholar realm, was no match for Yan Zhaoge who was only in the mid outer aura stage!

Relying on the levitating ability possessed by late outer aura Martial Scholars as well as the swiftness of the Leap of the Rising

Sun, Xiao Shen once again managed to barely avoid Yan Zhaoge's next blow.

However, having come into contact with Yan Zhaoge's aura-qi, the large beard on Xiao Shen's face was suddenly separated from its owner, gently flying away on the adjacent breeze.

Xiao Shen was stunned for a moment. Next, his face abruptly turned the crimson of blood. Having lost control of his emotions, his voice was no longer able to sustain its former roughness as he let out a sharp, piercing shriek full of with anger and hatred.

At this, Yan Zhaoge was also momentarily stunned.

The Xiao Shen before him had not had his beard partially slashed off. Rather, his entire large beard had been separated from his face cleanly, leaving behind a completely smooth lower jaw with not even a single bit of stubble to be seen.

Without his beard, Xiao Shen's form conformed with the image of the handsome youth within Yan Zhaoge's memories.

However, with that shrill noise which had left his mouth earlier, however he looked, Xiao Shen just seemed a little feminine, and somewhat different from a normal male!

Having his embarrassment turn into rage, Xiao Shen stared at Yan Zhaoge for a moment, before turning to glare at Feng Yunsheng with a venomous expression on his face. Finally, he

didn't continue to linger, as he turned and left.

The corners of Yan Zhaoge's mouth twitched as he swivelled his head to look back at Feng Yunsheng.

“You said you heavily injured him that year...exactly which part of him did you injure ah?”

Feng Yunsheng, however, had totally ignored all of Xiao Shen's fury and hatred that had been directed at her, her gaze instead having been focused on Yan Zhaoge all along.

While she was currently heavily injured, her cultivation limited to the Body Refinement realm, her experience and judgment still remained.

And it was exactly because of that that she had been so astonished and amazed by Yan Zhaoge's performance.

Before Yan Zhaoge had turned back to pose her the question, so surprised had she been that her mouth had all along been slightly open.

On hearing Yan Zhaoge's query, Feng Yunsheng snapped back to reality, replying with a relaxed expression on his face, “That year, his little brother was being unlawful, wanting to take advantage of me. I naturally helped to discipline it for him lor.”

“.....right.” Yan Zhaoge pursed his lips, suddenly feeling like the

wind blowing beneath his hips was a little chilly.

He had heard that Xiao Shen's maternal grandfather had only borne a single daughter, his mother. Having come to Xiao Shen's generation, he naturally only had that single grandson.

The Xiao family on his father's side, having come here, also only had him as the sole successor...

No wonder they want to kill you off, when, with your Grand Master being dead, there's no longer anyone in the Sacred Sun Clan who can protect you.

Feng Yunsheng said carelessly, "Of the so-called Four Rising Suns of the Sacred Sun Clan's young generation, Xiao Shen and Chao Yuanlong both have their own issues holding them back."

"Chao Yuanlong is unswervingly determined, not fearing danger or hardship. However, he likes to walk the path less travelled, always thinking of accomplishing things that other people can't succeed in, as if thinking that that is the only way he can exhibit his capabilities."

"Actually, if he had just honestly settled down and got on with things, cultivating in the more orthodox Sun Saint Clan martial arts just like the other disciples, rather than veering towards things like the Piercing Sun Needle Art and the Heavenly Snake Silk-Binding Hand, with his talent and perseverance, perhaps his actual combat ability would be slightly lower than currently it is now, but his accomplishments would only be higher in the future."

Feng Yunsheng shook her head, “While Xiao Shen’s perseverance cannot compare to Chao Yuanlong’s, he is better at comprehending the martial dao than Chao Yuanlong is. However, Xiao Shen is too wild and unbridled in his thoughts, especially being very lustful as well as a spendthrift, unable to control that ‘Little Xiao Shen’ of his. Otherwise, his accomplishments would be greater than they are now.”

At this point, Feng Yunsheng laughed, “Having helped him by ridding him of that problem by the root, his cultivation these past two years has obviously been improving at a much higher rate than before.”

At this, Yan Zhaoge just rolled his eyes, “He still lacks a [Sunflower Manual](#).”

Something that martial practitioners can only cultivate in after having, ahem.

Feng Yunsheng was momentarily speechless in her confusion, “What martial art is that; I’ve never heard of it before.”

Yan Zhaoge just waved his hands, no longer speaking. Instead, he began examining the spoils of his battle.

In his fight with Xiao Shen, both sides had clashed with a large amount of precious treasures.

While Xiao Shen had eventually managed to get away, the

connection between him and many of those treasures had been forcibly cut off by Yan Zhaoge.

Fleeing in a panic, Xiao Shen had naturally had no time to retrieve them. Therefore, they all now naturally entered Yan Zhaoge's pockets.

Amongst these, there were two mid-grade artifacts that just happened to be well-suited to him. However, Yan Zhaoge himself did not lack mid-grade artifacts.

Well, there was a high-grade artifact which could still be considered as having some value.

Still, the one which really drew his attention the most was that spirit artifact, the Radiant Sun Wheel!

The value of this spirit artifact was on a completely different level from that of normal artifacts.

Even Yan Zhaoge himself currently only possessed a single spirit artifact, the Jade Dragon Sword.

HSSB 48: My Strongest Point Is That I'm Low-Key

The Radiant Sun Wheel and Jade Dragon Sword were both outstanding, well-known items amongst all spirit artifacts.

If it weren't for their family backgrounds, it would be difficult for a Martial Scholar like Yan Zhaoge and Xiao Shen to possess such artifacts.

For mid-grade spirit artifacts, Yan Zhaoge's father and Xiao Shen's grandfather would naturally possess many of them.

However, with Yan Zhaoge's and Xiao Shen's current cultivation, the number of spirit artifacts that existed in the Eight Extremities World which they would be able to wield were a small number.

Not even mentioning Sacred Artifacts, even a mid-grade or high-grade spiritual artifact, when wielded by a Martial Scholar, would almost be unable to have its power unleashed at all.

Spirit artifacts possessed a spiritual consciousness, which elevated them above typical artifacts.

Thus, Feng Yunsheng was full of surprise as watched Yan Zhaoge survey the Radiant Sun Wheel.

To begin with, spirit artifacts possessed a consciousness that gave

them a certain independence. If the other party wasn't a Martial Grandmaster at the very least, it would be difficult to change the owner of the artifact.

At the moment, the Radiant Sun Wheel was still suppressed by the Jade Dragon Sword, and hadn't yet submitted and acknowledged Yan Zhaoge as its master.

If it wasn't for the suppression of the Jade Dragon Sword, it would have long since flown away in search of its erstwhile owner, Xiao Shen.

Now, Yan Zhaoge had gotten the opportunity to lock down the Radiant Sun Wheel, but in the same stroke, had been forced to use his own Jade Dragon Sword to bind it down.

The two spirit artifacts mutually suppressed each other. Without first resolving this problem, forget about the Radiant Sun Wheel—even Yan Zhaoge's Jade Dragon Sword would be unusable.

In terms of total strength, his strength had dropped a large amount.

For low-grade spirit artifacts, their meaning for Martial Scholars was akin to what a typical artifact would mean for martial practitioners in the Body Refinement realm.

Having taken the artifact, he naturally had to keep it. Still, if he encountered an enemy while in his current state, it would be a

little bit awkward.

“En.” Feng Yunsheng suddenly stared as Yan Zhaoge walked up to the intertwined Radiant Sun Wheel and Jade Dragon Sword, reached out his hands, and used each of them to grab one of the spirit artifacts.

The Radiant Sun Wheel loudly rumbled and let out a fierce aura. At this moment, it was almost as if a slumbering Martial Grandmaster had been woken up.

The Jade Dragon Sword also began to act identically. It was as though the two spirit artifacts had begun to struggle round after round, with neither emerging the victor.

Unperturbed, Yan Zhaoge reached out his two hands and used his ten fingers to gently stroke the spirit artifacts. Using his knuckles, he gently rapped their surface in a strange cadence.

The Jade Dragon Sword and the Radiant Sun Wheel once again vibrated slightly.

Yan Zhaoge’s eyes suddenly flashed with a strange light as they began to mirror a multitude of transformations, as though he had entered an entirely different world.

Within the world, an enormous golden colored sun was suspended in the sky while a jade colored dragon coiled itself around it.

Under the influences of the continued tapping from Yan Zhaoge, the two spirit artifacts actually began to slowly calm down.

Rather than mutual suppression, the two artifacts had truly become quiet as they entered a temporary state of calmness.

Feng Yunsheng opened her mouth as she thought, “He was actually able to calm down the Radiant Sun Wheel so quickly; just how did he do it?”

“This is practically unheard of!”

Turning back around, Feng Yunsheng lightly gasped in admiration, “Even though this one has heard of your esteemed name before, having seen it in person today, I can firmly say that the rumors weren’t exaggerated in the least—rather, they could only be considered to be too conservative.”

“Hearing isn’t as good as seeing; this idiom is something I’m known ever since I was a child, but the deepest impression I’ve had of it has been today.”

Yan Zhaoge pocketed the two spirit artifacts and pointed a finger, “As a person, I have a lot of strong points, but my best attribute is that I’m low-key.”

“In the future you’ll find that your thinking today will still have been conservative.”

Feng Yunsheng good-naturedly smiled and nodded her head, “Alright, I’ll wait and see.”

She followed up with a question, “That’s right, speaking of your sudden breakthrough into the mid outer aura Martial Scholar realm, why did they all look so dumbfounded? Even though it’s rare to break through under situations of intense pressure, it isn’t unheard of.”

“To my knowledge, there are some people who specifically seek out life and death situations and use the pressure to break through their own bottlenecks.”

One of the black-clothed guards by Yan Zhaoge’s side spoke out, “Not even a month ago, Young Master had just stepped into the outer aura Martial Scholar realm.”

These people who always followed Yan Zhaoge everywhere, upon seeing Yan Zhaoge’s miraculous breakthrough, were also struck dumb like wooden chickens. Their shock was even greater than that of the Sacred Sun Clan disciples.

At this point, Feng Yunsheng could no longer restrain herself as she turned to look at Yan Zhaoge.

Half a second later, she spoke again.

“Are you even human?”

Yan Zhaoge only laughed in response, not answering her.

Feng Yunsheng drew in a breath of cold air, taking a long moment before she regained her senses, “Everyone says that despite being a genius, you still are lacking when compared to your esteemed father when he was your age. However, from the looks of it, in cultivation talent at least, you even surpass your esteemed father.”

Knowledge from before the Great Calamity had been lost forever.

However, after the Great Calamity, amongst all the geniuses and old monsters of the contemporary era, it was Yan Zhaoge’s father—Broad Creed Mountain’s direct lineage disciple Yan Di, who was the youngest Martial Scholar, and also the youngest Martial Grandmaster.

At the same time, it seemed highly likely that he would also become the youngest Martial Saint.

Yan Zhaoge laughed lightly. Comparatively, breaking through from the early to mid outer aura stage had been much easier for him than breaking through from the late inner aura Martial Scholar to the early outer aura Martial Scholar realm.

This had had a lot to do with a number of fortuitous events and chance encounters. Upon reaching the early outer aura Martial scholar realm, he had quickly accomplished the second cleansing of the marrows within his bones. With the Profound Spirit pill to

supplement his aura-qi and his encounter with the ice dragon soul providing momentum, he had had the optimal encounters to let him make his breakthrough.

“Everyone says that a tiger father will not birth a useless dog of a son, so I also have to work hard. Even if I can’t surpass my father, I at least can’t fall behind too much.”

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “What’s more, the path of cultivation leads to a gate. The gate is like flat ground for some people, where they can easily progress; but, for others, they can become trapped at a bottleneck and spend many years without being able to make a single step.”

“Yet, after stepping through this gate, those who had originally fallen behind may not be destined to fall behind forever. The situation could easily invert, with those who had originally fallen behind surpassing those who were once in the lead.”

“This is also a commonly seen occurrence.”

Feng Yunsheng irritably scowled, “I’ve still never heard of someone as exaggerated as you, who broke through from the early to the mid outer aura stage in just a month. It must be unprecedented.”

Yan Zhaoge raised his eyebrows and laughed, “It’s like I’ve said then; my strong points are very numerous, but staying low key is definitely my strongest point.”

Yan Zhaoge suddenly changed the topic, “Speaking of which, I’m afraid that our meeting here wasn’t entirely coincidental.”

Feng Yunsheng was startled.

Yan Zhaoge looked at her, then gently said, “Originally, our purpose here was to search for Meng Wan.”

“Don’t look at me with that kind of expression. She’s the Sacred Sun Clan’s Maiden of Extreme Yin while I’m a disciple of Broad Creed Mountain. It’s natural that I’d try to make sure she doesn’t win the Extreme Yin Bout.”

Yan Zhaoge stroked his chin, “Thinking back on it, my people were following her tracks, but she sensed our pursuit. In fact, she was constantly leading us towards your side.”

“I was thinking that it was entirely out of character for Meng Wan to leave the Sacred Sun Clan grounds. Indeed, she had not come here without reason.”

Feng Yunsheng’s gaze had become considerably gentler, “Little Wan was here to help me, whose Master had passed away. Knowing that Xiao Shen had personally left the clan to look for me, she came hoping to protect me.”

“Leading you to me, she must have hoped that Broad Creed Mountain would shield me. This way, she wouldn’t have to personally make an appearance, whereupon she would be caught

between both sides.”

Yan Zhaoge asked, “You two had the same Master?”

Feng Yunsheng shook her head, “No. However, that year, as we were both similarly Maidens of Extreme Yin, we received much of the same tutoring and training and were often together.”

HSSB 49: The Phoenix Awaiting Nirvana

Yan Zhaoge looked at Feng Yunsheng, smiling lightly, “Have you ever thought that if not for her very existence itself, even having lost your Extreme Yin Physique that year, the Sun Saint Clan would also not have given up on you that easily, rather spending much more time and effort on helping you to recover?”

Feng Yunsheng laughed, “It’s not something that even requires thinking about; rather, it’s a totally obvious fact laid right out there for all to see. Still, it’s got nothing to do with Little Wan herself.”

Yan Zhaoge asked somewhat interestedly, “You being older than Meng Wan, you should have joined the clan earlier than her; I suppose your cultivation must also have been higher than hers?”

“You were the actual prime representative whom the Sacred Sun Clan had actually wanted to send to participate in the Extreme Yin Bout that year?”

Feng Yunsheng nodded her head candidly, “That’s right. When I left the clan, I was already in the Martial Scholar Realm. At that time, Little Wan was still only at the peak of the Body Refinement Realm.”

“She should only have managed to succeed in breaking through to the Martial Scholar realm just right before the first Extreme Yin Bout was held.”

She glanced at Yan Zhaoge, saying impatiently, “I know what you’re thinking, but me accidentally trespassing into Hell, that danger zone, and losing my Extreme Yin Physique as a result-Little Wan had nothing to do with it at all.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “Perhaps the relationship between you does indeed run deep, but, her luring me to rescue you this time; isn’t it possible that it stemmed from her sense of guilt as a well as a desire to make it up to you?”

“Or perhaps having benefited so much from the whole thing, she just wanted to show off how virtuous she is, helping you regarding this matter in order to evoke a sense of satisfaction in herself?”

Feng Yunsheng laughed, “I’m just not used to looking at people as though all their actions stem from a desire to do me harm. Still, I cannot deny that the possibilities you mentioned do indeed exist.”

“It’s only; I believe in Little Wan.” Saying this last sentence, Feng Yunsheng’s expression was calm, but her tone was as though it could hack through nails and cut through metal.

Yan Zhaoge smiled, before changing the topic, “Still, she’s so certain that you will never be able to regain your Extreme Yin Physique?”

“She’s so certain that she’s not actually gifting my Broad Creed Mountain with a Maiden of Extreme Yin, who’ll compete with her for the Extreme Yin Crown in the future?”

“That would be equivalent to consorting with the enemy, and why would she do such a thing.”

Feng Yunsheng replied calmly, “Because she has the confidence.”

“Regardless of whether or not the other Sacred Grounds dispatch a few more Maidens of Extreme Yin.”

“Little Wan also has the confidence to win the Extreme Yin Crown back for the Sacred Sun Clan.”

“As such, even if I do manage to recover, she will only feel happy for me, for the me whose position in Broad Creed Mountain will surely rise as a result.”

“However, the Extreme Yin Crown belongs only to her, to her and the Sacred Sun Clan.”

“That is her confidence.”

Hearing her words, within Yan Zhaoge’s mind surfaced the image of that young girl, her features bright and alluring while also delicate, her moving pair of eyes inducing a sense of tenderness within those who saw her.

The one who had secured the eventual victory during the very first Extreme Yin Bout, the very first official owner of the Extreme

Yin Crown ever since it had surfaced within this world, was exactly the Sacred Sun Clan's, Meng Wan!

According to Feng Yunsheng, she should only have barely stepped into the Martial Scholar realm then.

Feng Yunsheng had a faraway look on her face, "Don't be fooled by that child's soft and weak outer appearance; in truth, she's actually also very clever, as well as resilient."

"Whether it is the power of Extreme Yin she carries or her cultivating potential, she's definitely a super-genius."

"Back then, it was only because I had entered the clan earlier and therefore cultivated for longer that I was the prime candidate for representing the clan."

"Actually, if we had started from the same point, at the same time, I can't say for sure that I would definitely be able to hold the advantage over her in a fight."

Yan Zhaoge laughed out loud, "Flipping this sentence around, wouldn't you also be saying that Meng Wan would actually also not be able to defeat you for certain?"

Feng Yunsheng raised her brows, "While I will not have an excessively high opinion of myself, I will not speak of myself excessively lowly either."

Yan Zhaoge said simply, “A pity, though, that she failed the second time around.”

During the second Extreme Yin Bout, Meng Wan had still lost eventually, the Extreme Yin Crown falling into the hands of a disciple of the Water Domain’s Sacred Ground, the Jade Sea City.

Feng Yunsheng said without a change in her expression, “I have also heard about this matter. That was because not long before the Bout, Little Wan had just utilised the Extreme Yin Crown while fighting directly against a Flame Devil King in the Eastern Sea.”

“During the second Bout, she was participating while injured.”

“When the time comes for the third Extreme Yin Bout, she will let the entire world know that as long as nothing is wrong with her, the Extreme Yin Crown will fall to no one else.”

“Also, the Phoenix which has experienced Nirvana, will only be more dazzling.”

Feng Yunsheng’s tone was totally natural, as though she was only laying out a perfectly simple fact which could not be any more obvious.

As he looked at her, a hint of a smile was revealed on Yan Zhaoge’s face, “This saying can be used for Meng Wan; but, doesn’t it apply to you yourself as well?”

Feng Yunsheng said candidly, “Even if Senior Brother Yan really does have a way to let me regain my Extreme Yin Physique, my starting point would now, conversely, be lagging behind Little Wan’s by far too much.”

“I do not dare to say that I would definitely be able to catch up with Little Wan. However, I would definitely grab hold of such a precious opportunity with all my might.”

“Broad Creed Mountain accepting me in my darkest hour; regardless of their reason for doing so, this debt of gratitude, I will repay with my very life.”

“Words are needless; only death will seal the debt.”

Whatever the reason he had done it, when she had been placed under threat by the Sacred Sun Clan disciples, Yan Zhaoge, in beating Xiao Shen as well as Chao Yuanlong till their faces were all sooty and muddied, had undoubtedly already expressed his stance on this matter.

As for whether or not Yan Zhaoge could personally stand for Broad Creed Mountain, Feng Yunsheng had no need to think about it now. She simply needed to follow Yan Zhaoge’s instructions.

Yan Zhaoge, on the other hand, was in a pretty good mood. Regarding Feng Yunsheng’s Extreme Yin Physique, while more planning still had to be done, he had already had some thoughts on how to recover it.

Although they would have offended the Sacred Sun Clan a step further, to Broad Creed Mountain, the addition of a Maiden of Extreme Yin would undoubtedly be a huge gain.

If it all worked out as planned, having rendered a huge service to the clan, it would be a great help to Yan Zhaoge as well as his father, Yan Di.

Yan Zhaoge looked at the sky, "Let's go."

They all set off, as Yan Zhaoge continuously began passing down orders, a few black-clothed Martial Scholars nodding their heads as, by his command, they dispersed for the delivering of some letters.

While he had already decided on things for himself, there were some people that Yan Zhaoge still had to inform about this matter as soon as possible, such as his own father, as well as the one currently in charge of the East Heaven Region, Broad Creed Mountain's one and only East Elder.

With this matter not a minor one, far from being able to compare with his previous beating of Chao Yuanlong and the others in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, the Sacred Sun Clan's reaction to it would undoubtedly be a much more intense one.

Xiao Shen and the others having escaped, there would definitely be more things following. The faster Broad Creed Mountain received the news, the more advantageous it would be for their handling of this matter.

Other than that, Yan Zhaoge had also intentionally only touched on the reason for Feng Yunsheng having lost her Extreme Yin Physique briefly, while getting his subordinates to find some way to inform the other Sacred Ground, Jade Sea City, about this matter.

Amongst the Sacred Grounds, Jade Sea City's relationship with the Sacred Sun Clan was exceptionally terrible.

Based on the principle of the enemy of an enemy being a friend, they had instead formed a rather harmonious relationship with Broad Creed Mountain; the two were almost as close as allies.

Jade Sea City's Maiden of Extreme Yin was the victor of the second Extreme Yin Bout, and also Meng Wan's greatest competitor in the third and upcoming Bout.

The methods with which the various Sacred Grounds had used to covertly deal with one another's Maidens of Extreme Yin had never stopped all these years.

Having never trusted in the Sacred Sun Clan's moral calibre, Yan Zhaoge naturally had to send Jade Sea City a gentle reminder, lest they were unknowingly cheated.

As they traversed though the mountain range, Yan Zhaoge suddenly looked towards the distance as he seemed to have detected something.

While the heavy, torrential sound of the nearby waterfall could be heard, it still couldn't drown out the conversing voices of a group of people.

Looking over from far, Yan Zhaoge saw a crowd of people standing by the waterfall. They were divided into two small groups standing on opposing sides, as if currently having a confrontation.

“Is it Zhao Yuan's group?”

Zhao Yuan was the oldest son of the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, and was also very familiar with Yan Zhaoge.

Along with him was the Third Prince Zhao Sheng. This person, however, was somewhat closer to the Eastern Tang's Principal Elder Yan Xu.

Still, whether it was Zhao Yuan or Zhao Sheng, they were both currently staring at a youth with unfriendly expressions on their faces.

That youth seemed to be around sixteen or seventeen years of age, looking somewhat similar to the two Zhao brothers as he too was adorned in the garb of royalty, though appearing much plainer in comparison.

HSSB 50: The Eastern Tang's Sixteenth Prince

Yan Zhaoge could tell that that youth was probably another of Zhao Yuan's brothers and also a prince, just one that he had not previously seen before.

Yan Zhaoge watched the ongoing scene somewhat interestedly.

The First Prince, like his father, leaned towards Broad Creed Mountain's Yan Di's faction.

Zhao Yuan himself also had some ties with the original owner of Yan Zhaoge's current body.

And not being able to compete with Zhao Yuan in this area, the Third Prince Zhao Sheng had naturally chosen to walk closer to Yan Zhaoge's second apprentice-uncle's faction instead.

While the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom himself leaned towards Yan Di, as Broad Creed Mountain's Principal Elder in the Eastern Tang, Yan Xu, was still from the opposing faction, Yan Sheng's days were still passed smoothly.'

If the competition for the position of Broad Creed Mountain's next Clan Chief ended up with Yan Zhaoge's second apprentice-uncle's eventual victory, there might then be more to the story of who would be the future King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom.

Still, on the whole, the fight for the Eastern Tang's yet undecided Crown Prince position basically just comprised of the battle for supremacy between Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng.

Not having liked the sight of the other for a long time, the two had all along been clashing head-to-head.

Both standing together in targeting another prince like this; such a thing had not happened in a long time.

“By Royal Father's decree, I and my men were to accompany Royal Uncle Jin in entering the mountain to capture the wanted outlaws.”

Now Zhao Sheng's voice sounded from afar, “The people in question were surrounded by my and Eldest Brother's guards within this very mountain, and also beaten to the point of suffering serious injuries by the two of us. If not for that, do you think you could have dealt with them that easily?”

“Now, having easily picked off their remnants, you are even intending to withhold all the information and keep it to yourself. Sixteenth Brother, don't you think that you're just being too much?”

Zhao Yuan also said in a low voice, “Sixteenth Brother, it's fine if you take some of that credit. Still, you shouldn't keep that person's testimony to yourself. If there any leads, we should make good use of this time to continue the investigation further.”

“The other party and Ghost Hatchet Elder having had something to do with the abnormalities in the Sealing Dragon Abyss is not something that can be taken lightly. If this is delayed, we will not be able to properly answer to Royal Father and our merit will also become a demerit.”

Hearing the names Ghost Hatchet Elder and Sealing Dragon Abyss being mentioned, Yan Zhaoge got even more interested, “Oh, looks interesting. Let’s go over.”

Walking to the front, Yan Zhaoge saw the youth who was currently being surrounded laugh unconcernedly, “What I should do, I know well within my heart. I do not require the guidance of my two Royal Brothers; once we’ve returned to the capital and reported this matter to Royal Father, all will naturally be known.”

At his tone which was really quite uncourteous, Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng were both slightly incensed.

Still, as Yan Zhaoge made his appearance, the two hurriedly suppressed their fury, ignoring that youth to first pay their greetings to him.

“Zhaoge, what a coincidence; you’re also in this region?”

“Young Master Yan.”

Of the martial practitioners of the Eastern Tang Kingdom accompanying the two Princes, the Martial Scholars cupped their

fists while the Martial Artists bowed as they all exclaimed in unison, “Greetings to the Broad Creed Young Master!”

In recent days, Yan Zhaoge’s name had resounded more splendidly and shone ever brighter within the lands of the Eastern Tang.

While news of his battle with Xiao Shen and Chao Yuanlong not long ago within the Luliao Mountains had still not gotten out yet, merely his previous overwhelming victory over the Sacred Sun Clan’s Chao Yuanlong in the Sealing Dragon Abyss and his competition with Xiao Shen in Overlooking Abyss City which had ended with him repelling the latter had already caused his fame to rise up to a whole new level.

It didn’t even have to be mentioned that Broad Creed Mountain was a huge organisation that the Eastern Tang Kingdom was completely unable to compare with.

As princes, Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng had been painstakingly groomed by the royal family, a huge amount of resources having been invested in them. With that, they were already two of the most prominent figures amongst the Eastern Tang Kingdom’s younger generation.

Both of them had already reached the Martial Scholar level. Still, when stepping into the Martial Scholar realm, they had both already been past the age of twenty-five.

Meanwhile, when the Yan Zhaoge before them had stepped into

the Martial Scholar realm, he had been younger than even the Zhao Hao of now.....

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly, “The two of you, long time no see.”

“Earlier, when I passed the Eastern Tang capital, I only stopped momentarily to meet Uncle, and did not meet up with the two of you to talk about old times.”

“I never thought that I’d meet up with you in these Luliao Mountains instead.”

Zhao Yuan said, “The abnormalities in the Sealing Dragon Abyss are no trivial matter. Thus, Royal Father sent me over to personally take charge.”

“I still have to thank you, Zhaoge, for having discovered that the Ghost Hatchet Elder had had something to do with this matter. Having further investigated into the matter, I discovered that he had not actually been acting alone.”

“Behind the Ghost Hatchet Elder very possibly exists some hidden organisation. He should be one of the top experts of that organisation, which should also have some mid and low-tier members as well as outer ring underlings.”

“Entering the Luliao Mountains this time was to chase down and arrest a few members of this organisation. To us, whilst being a mission, it is also a form of tempering.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded his head. To Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng, this was also a chance for them to render some merits and thus gain some face in front of the ministers of the Eastern Tang.

In the end, however, it was like someone had plucked the peach before them, picking up some easy credit. No wonder the two Zhao brothers were both so unhappy with him.

Zhao Sheng looked back, his gaze sweeping over that youth as he asked dissatisfiedly, “Sixteenth Brother, are you not going to say your greetings?”

That youth looked at Yan Zhaoge calmly, before saying mildly, “Greetings.”

Looking at him, the corners of Yan Zhaoge’s mouth twitched slightly.

“If I didn’t see wrongly, I actually saw some arrogance and disdain within his gaze?” Yan Zhaoge was rendered a bit speechless as he appraised the youth before him all over.

At around seventeen years of age, he had a cultivation of the mid qi-directing Body Refinement realm, where the qi ocean within the dantian was opened up.

As someone who did not hail from a Sacred Ground, having such a cultivation base at this age was rarely seen, and could already be

considered extremely outstanding.

This was even more so considering the garb of this youth. Although he was a prince, he obviously didn't look like he was valued much; the amount of resources being allocated to him should most likely be somewhat limited.

Still, however one looked at it, whether it was in the area of personal ability or personal background, he completely couldn't compare with Yan Zhaoge.

Still, within his eyes, Yan Zhaoge had truly glimpsed a passing flash of disdain.

And his attitude towards Yan Zhaoge had already passed the point of being not humble while also not being haughty, having clearly reached the point of being arrogant and rude.

Still, Yan Zhaoge could clearly feel that the other party really didn't put him in his eyes at all. It was not a lack of fear brought about by ignorance, but rather a heartfelt disdain stemming from his own arrogance as well as self-confidence.

As this youth himself saw it, this was a totally natural thing.

...Just like how a Martial Saint, or a Martial Grandmaster would look at Martial Scholars and Martial Artists.

A weird feeling rose up within Yan Zhaoge's heart.

From a corner, Zhao Yuan's face darkened as he suppressed his voice with his aura-qi and sent Yan Zhaoge a sound transmission, "Zhaoge, don't lower yourself to the same level as him."

"This is my Sixteenth Brother, Zhao Hao."

"In the past, he wasn't like this, rather being a submissive yes-man and an otherwise completely unordinary character. However, half a year ago, he seemed to have suddenly seen the light, his cultivation beginning to improve by leaps and bounds, one day a thousand li."

"Still, his personality also became rather arrogant and rude as a result." Zhao Yuan said half bemusedly, half angrily, "The outlaws that we captured this time were surrounded within the mountain and also heavily injured by us, but it ended with him claiming all the easy pickings for himself."

"Even having done so, having interrogated and obtained the useful testimonies, he just directly killed the captives off. When asked what he knew, he just refused to tell."

Yan Zhaoge also couldn't really get his head around it as he commented, "...weird."

Still, Yan Zhaoge had no intention of interfering in this matter. While he was familiar with Zhao Yuan, no matter what one said, Zhao Hao was also similarly a son of the Eastern Tang monarch.

As for the news which Zhao Hao had concealed, he would naturally not be able to hide it any longer when face-to-face with his own father. Through the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Yan Zhaoge would also be informed.

It was Zhao Hao's rudeness and arrogance, on the contrary, that gave Yan Zhaoge a weird feeling inside.

Unless the other party was a madman.

If he wasn't, where did that boldness of his stem from?

Boasting a non-existent power and really having something to back him up-those were two very different things indeed.

Yan Zhaoge pondered within his heart, his expression indifferent as it expressed that he wouldn't lower himself down to Zhao Hao's level and bicker with him.

Zhao Hao raised his brows. At Yan Zhaoge's total disregard of him, other than disdain, some ridicule could now also be seen within his gaze.

Zhao Sheng, however, was slightly disappointed at Yan Zhaoge's lack of reaction.

However, his attention very quickly fell on Zhao Hao again, as he

laughed coldly, “Sixteenth Brother, don’t refuse a toast only to drink a forfeit.”

HSSB 51: Dangers Lurking All Around

Zhao Sheng looked at Zhao Hao with an unfriendly expression on his face. Glancing at him, Zhao Hao just laughed as he shook his head.

As a Martial Scholar, by common logic, it should be obvious that Zhao Sheng should be able to take care of a mere Martial Artist like him as easily as blowing away dust.

However, within Zhao Hao's gaze was no fear or caution whatsoever. On the contrary, he actually still seemed extremely calm.

And within that calmness, a few hints of his total disregard for Zhao Sheng could also be seen.

Yan Zhaoge's eyes slightly blinked his eyes, "The way he looks at Zhao Sheng is no different from the way that he looks at me..."

"In his eyes, Zhao Sheng and I are on the same level?"

Yan Zhaoge laughed soundlessly.

Zhao Hao asked mildly, "What kind of forfeit does Third Brother want me to drink?"

Zhao Sheng snorted coldly, "Over this period of time, Sixteenth

Brother's cultivation has soared tremendously. Still, with that, your actual combat experience will naturally be somewhat lacking."

"Third Brother has some people under me that are just suited to help you, Sixteenth Brother, train yourself up a little."

"By accumulating more experience, we'll make it such that you are not only able to take down people lying at the verge of death. Otherwise, if you meet up with a real tough nut to crack in the future, the one who would be unlucky would be you."

The disdain within Zhao Hao's eyes grew, as the way he looked at Zhao Sheng seemed to resemble the way an adult would look at an immature child messing about.

Not saying anything else, he directly unsheathed his sword, standing silently right where he stood, "Who wants to give me pointers?"

Other people still might not think of it as anything, but Yan Zhaoge's perception far exceeded that of all the others here.

From Yan Zhaoge's perspective, with that one sword in hand, the atmosphere around Zhao Hao had instantly changed.

More feral, unrestrained, penetrating; his edge was revealed!

His entire person resembled a sharp sword that had just left its

sheath, raring to charge into the skies and slash the very heavens apart.

This was a force formed purely of his atmosphere alone; it was hard to explain in words, but it truly existed.

While currently, Zhao Hao was indeed still a Martial Artist, not having concealed the true power of his cultivation base, the atmosphere around him actually seemed to preside over the vast majority of people in this world.

It was as if even if a Martial Grandmaster stood before him, it would still be nothing worth mentioning at all.

Yan Zhaoge raised his brows, “Interesting, don’t tell me...”

While Zhao Sheng really wished that he could beat Zhao Hao till he was half-dead, he was, after all, already in the Martial Scholar realm, being more than ten years older than Zhao Hao.

Although Zhao Hao had not behaved respectfully or humbly at all, in front of all these others, and with even Yan Zhaoge there as well, Zhao Sheng still suppressed his desire to go deal with Zhao Hao himself.

However, he naturally still didn’t intend to make things easy for him.

Zhao Hao was at the eighth level of the Body Refinement realm, in

the mid qi-directing stage. While the opponent Zhao Sheng chose for him was also similarly in the mid qi-directing stage, he had a fierce, aggressive air about him, obviously being someone who was already used to licking blood off the edge of his sword, an experienced person incomparably familiar with slaughter and death.

The killing air around his entire body was so thick that it was almost enough for all of his opponents who lacked combat experience to have their nerve broken, turning into lambs for the slaughter to be dealt with as he liked.

However, as easily as blowing dust, within a single round, he was defeated by Zhao Hao!

With a single slash of Zhao Hao's sword, his entire arm flew directly into the sky!

The extent of his ferocity caused everyone to suck in a breath.

“What gall!” The livid Zhao Sheng waved his hand, and a late qi-directing stage swordsman stood out.

This swordsman was in the ninth level of the Body Refinement realm, in the late qi-directing stage, being not far away from the tenth and final stage as well.

Zhao Hao didn't mind, as, brandishing his sword, he laughed, “It's all the same.”

The result of the battle between the two once again totally stunned the spectating crowd.

The victor, was still Zhao Hao!

Zhao Hao laughed with a loud ‘ha’, “Will the next challenger be someone from the final stage of the Body Refinement realm, or will it be Third Brother yourself?”

Amidst his words, a cracking noise resounded from his body, as the faint boom of thunder could also be heard.

The sound of thunder had not come from outside; rather, it had originated from within Zhao Hao’s body.

Everyone was simultaneously startled, “Inner qi enters the bones; the sound of thunder cleanses the marrows? This is... breaking through to the late qi-directing stage, the first cleansing of the marrows within the bones?!”

At Yan Zhaoge’s side, Feng Yunsheng could not help but smile at this, as she gave Yan Zhaoge a look.

While she didn’t speak, she had obviously just remembered the earlier scene of Yan Zhaoge facing off against Xiao Shen.

Yan Zhaoge, however, didn’t smile, just watching Zhao Hao

quietly.

“This person has not exerted his full strength; he did not release the killing techniques of the sword that he is the most proficient in.”

What Yan Zhaoge could see, was so much more than those around him, “In facing consecutive battles, swiftly obtaining victory in each one. In this, he relied on his knowledge and experience that far exceed that of his opponent, as well as his control of the sword within his hand.”

“Just like me, being able to use even a branch of bamboo as a sword, and similarly able to beat up those at the peak of the Body Refinement realm till their heads are all full of bumps even without having to draw on my aura-qi.”

“This person’s attainment in the Dao of the Sword is extremely high, being able to use a wooden or bamboo sword in place of an actual sword; even using his finger as a sword or the Swordless realm where a sword can be formed of pure qi should be nothing to him. It is only that he loves the sword too much, thus being even more unwilling to not have one on him. With a single sword in hand, he has already achieved the dao.”

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “Suddenly saw the light half a year ago? Haha...”

Zhao Hao was currently overflowing with a domineering air, as, his sword held out horizontally in front of him, he asked, “Does

Third Brother have any more men? Otherwise, Third Brother intends to come at me himself?”

“What about Eldest Brother? Why not come and play as well; I don’t mind.”

His face sunken as water, Zhao Sheng bit his teeth, “Good, Sixteenth Brother; I really hadn’t noticed your ability before. Still it’s a little too early for you to be so full of yourself.”

Saying this, he looked like he was going to stride forward.

Zhao Hao having provoked him so openly, he had no further need to restrain himself, no longer having to worry about his Royal Father blaming him afterwards for what he was going to do now.

At this time, a voice suddenly resounded from the distance, “Biological brothers should cherish and be on good terms with one another. Exchanging pointers whilst in the same cultivation realm would be fine, but a Martial Scholar fighting with a Martial Artist, would really be a little too much.”

The next moment, a middle-aged man with a look of authority about him appeared before everyone’s eyes.

He first looked towards Yan Zhaoge, nodding, “Zhaoge, long time no see.”

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “Your Highness Jin is even more illustrious

than before.”

The newcomer was the Royal Brother of the current King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, the second strongest expert of the Eastern Tang’s royal family, Zhao Shilie. Yan Zhaoge was also acquainted with him from before.

However, this person leaned towards the Sacred Sun Clan, and was the greatest springboard for the Sacred Sun Clan’s emergence into the Eastern Tang Kingdom.

The Eastern Tang Kingdom’s Crown Prince position still being unconfirmed was mostly due to this very person.

Whether it was his subordinate powers or the Sacred Sun Clan behind him, they were all applying pressure on the Eastern Tang Kingdom’s King, wishing for his Royal Brother rather than his eldest son to be the heir to his throne.

In this world where the martial way reigned supreme and personal power could change everything, many laws that existed in the secular world no longer applied.

For example, if the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom were to die this very day, not only would the Eastern Tang Kingdom have lost a sovereign, it would also have lost a Martial Grandmaster.

It would be an extremely huge loss in terms of the Eastern Tang’s overall power.

Whether it was Zhao Yuan or Zhao Sheng, only being Martial Scholars, even if they ascended the throne, in the area of possessing a high-tier strength, they were destined to be unable to replace their Royal Father within the following period.

Someone like Prince Jin who, while being weaker than the current King himself, was also similarly a Martial Grandmaster; it would be fine if he just loyally assisted the new King from the side, but if other intentions were to crop up within his mind, the situation would instantly turn complicated.

In secular dynasties, when an old king arranged for his successor before his death, he would naturally sweep away any unstable elements.

However, the situation with Prince Jin was something that even the Eastern Tang Kingdom's King himself found to be tricky.

After all, Zhao Shilie was also a Martial Grandmaster, comprising an important portion of the Eastern Tang Kingdom's power. Having killed him, it would still be the Eastern Tang that would have to suffer.

Moreover, behind Zhao Shilie stood the Sacred Sun Clan. Even though the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom had Broad Creed Mountain behind him, making a move against him would still be difficult.

The Eastern Tang Kingdom was currently sustained at a weak

equilibrium. While the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom and Broad Creed Mountain currently held the advantage, there were still potential dangers lurking all around.

Having greeted Yan Zhaoge, Zhao Shilie now smiled amicably as he looked towards the three Zhao brothers, “If you want to compete, you don’t actually have to resort to fighting.”

“Forms of competition which do not risk harming your relationship; there are many of those.”

HSSB 52: I Also Have A Bad Temper

At Zhao Shilie's words, Yan Zhaoge scoffed.

This Prince Jin who yearned for the Eastern Tang throne had obviously not said this out of good intentions.

While he was a Martial Grandmaster, in terms of knowledge and experience, he was in no way comparable to Yan Zhaoge.

He was able to see that Zhao Hao's abilities were far from normal, but unable to detect what lay beyond that.

As Zhao Shilie saw it, while Zhao Hao had been able to dominate and defeat two Martial Artists, if he were to have to face Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng who were already Martial Scholars, he would undoubtedly be knocked out in a single move.

In reality, it was not only Zhao Shilie; almost everyone here also thought that way.

The way they saw it, the Zhao Hao who had taken the initiative to provoke and challenge Zhao Sheng was no better than a madman.

Yan Zhaoge, though, did not think of it that way. While it would indeed be tough if Zhao Hao wanted to surpass levels and make battle across the huge gulf that lay between the Body Refinement and Martial Scholar realms, against Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng, it

wasn't like he would be one-sidedly suppressed and have no way to fight back against them whatsoever.

The difference in their attainments in the martial dao should be extremely huge, and the gap between their levels of knowledge and experience would only be even bigger. It wouldn't even be too much to call it the difference between the heavens and the earth.

The gaze with which Zhao Hao looked at Zhao Shilie was actually also filled with a bit of disregard. It was just that he had attached somewhat more importance to him than he would a Martial Scholar.

While Zhao Shilie naturally didn't feel any goodwill towards Zhao Hao, as he saw it, Zhao Hao could aid him in suppressing Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng.

The more intense the fight between his Royal Nephews, the more evenly matched they were, the better it would naturally be for Zhao Shilie.

The Zhao Hao who had originally been completely ordinary before having suddenly cropped out of nowhere at this time was naturally seen as a good chess piece by Zhao Shilie.

As for whether or not Zhao Hao would be stronger than Zhao Yuan in the future and affect his, Zhao Shilie's position, that was a different question altogether.

At the end of the day, Zhao Hao was currently no more than a mere Martial Artist.

“What is my Eastern Tang Kingdom most famous for in the East Heaven Region? It’s alchemy, isn’t it; and wouldn’t that be a good area in which to compete whilst making sure that your relationship is not soured.”

Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng were also not good-for-nothings. By tradition, the entire Eastern Tang royal family were all good hands at pill concoction, just like how they were also proficient in the areas of martial arts and political administration.

The greatest alchemy power on Eastern Tang soil, the Pill Pavilion, was actually backed by its royal family.

“In making this proposal, Zhao Shilie would naturally have done so based on his understanding towards Zhao Hao, which he should have a certain level of. Looks like this will be interesting.” Yan Zhaoge did not speak, just watching Zhao Shilie’s performance coldly from the side.

Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng having also thought of this, they naturally hesitated, but could not show any weakness.

Of the two of them, one was the son of the Queen while the other was the son of a concubine. Meanwhile, Zhao Hao’s birth mother was but a mere palace maid.

The environments the two had been raised in as well as the educations they had received since youth had both been far superior to that of Zhao Hao.

If they completed in martial arts, Martial Scholars against a Martial Artist, there would be no glory in winning no matter how one saw it.

The two glanced at Zhao Hao, then nodded their heads to express their agreement.

Although Zhao Hao's cultivation had soared tremendously, the two Zhao brothers just didn't believe that he would even be able to obtain a victory over them in the dao of alchemy.

Zhao Shilie smiled lightly, "The Pill Pavilion's Head Tribute Elder, Mr Wang, just happens to be here as well. With Young Master Yan's background, he must have a lot of knowledge in this area. This Prince also knows something about the dao of alchemy. Along with Mr Wang, the three of us can also act as judges for you; this is also a rare opportunity."

Yan Zhaoge laughed, neither confirming nor rejecting his words. From far, a few martial practitioners now escorted an old man over.

Seeing this old man, Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng both hurriedly rushed to greet him first, "Greetings, Elder Wang."

It was only Zhao Hao who remained standing where he was, only mildly nodding his head to the old man.

However, not only did Elder Wang not take offense as a result, he actually nodded back at Zhao Hao.

Seeing this, Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng were both instantly shocked.

Afterwards, when old Mr Wang understood the situation, he only shook his head, “What is this to even compare about; the Sixteenth Prince’s skill in the dao of alchemy is superior even to mine.”

“At his age, with his cultivation base, the level of his skill in pill concoction is something that this old man has never seen in my life before.”

His position being special, having a straight disposition, he could speak a little unrestrainedly without having to concern himself with what he said.

The moment the words left his mouth, Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng were both completely stunned.

On Eastern Tang soil, there was only one person who could compete with this Elder in the dao of alchemy, and that was the King himself.

Even Prince Jin, this Martial Grandmaster, was inferior in this

area to the Mr Wang who was only in the Martial Scholar realm.

His expression calm, Zhao Hao said simply, “For a Martial Scholar, your skill in alchemy can already be considered as not bad.”

A smile appeared on Zhao Shilie’s face, “This, however, is something that even this Prince does not understand. To think that a thousand li horse would appear in my Eastern Tang in the area of alchemy.”

“You didn’t know, huh,” Yan Zhaoge quickly and discreetly rolled his eyes, “If you didn’t know, you would come up with this sort of suggestion?”

“Still, how did you come to know of this?”

Yan Zhaoge’s line of vision slid past Zhao Shilie and Zhao Hao, finally coming to land on Pill Pavilion’s Head Tribute Elder Mr Wang.

Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng’s faces looked a little ugly as Zhao Hao now laughed arrogantly, “Royal Brothers stand no chance at all in the dao of alchemy; maybe we should just go back to competing in martial arts.”

The Yan Zhaoge who had not spoken up all along now finally opened his mouth, “As His Highness Jin said, this kind of small things do not need to risk harming the relationship between you.”

“Just compete in alchemy then.”

Zhao Yuan looked at Yan Zhaoge bemusedly; even Zhao Shilie was a little startled.

Yan Zhaoge continued, “However, since I just happen to be here at this moment as well, why not add some festivity to this occasion?”

Zhao Shilie raised his brows slightly, “Oh? Which side does Zhaoge intend to wager on?”

If Yan Zhaoge were to wager on Zhao Hao, Zhao Shilie would really be bemused then. As he saw it, this was not merely a simple gambling game.

Rather, him doing so would mean that Yan Zhaoge, as well as the Yan Di behind him, amongst the Princes of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, would be giving up on Zhao Yuan and switching over to supporting Zhao Hao instead!

Zhao Yuan’s expression did not change, but it could obviously be seen that he was currently gazing at Yan Zhaoge nervously.

“I’m backing Brother Zhao Yuan.” Yan Zhaoge was forthcoming with his words.

Zhao Yuan breathed a sigh of relief, as the others became even more confused.

Zhao Shilie said, “From old Mr Wang revealing Heaven’s will with a single phrase, this Prince naturally looks favourably on Royal Nephew Zhao Hao.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, “Then it’s all set.”

“What does Zhaoge want to wager?”

“I want to gamble for Your Highness Jin’s share of the Pill Pavilion.”

Hearing his words, Zhao Shilie’s gaze abruptly flickered, as he stared at Yan Zhaoge closely.

The Pill Pavilion was a very wealthy organisation. Not only was it the top alchemy organisation within the Eastern Tang Kingdom, it was also the Eastern Tang’s greatest source of exports.

The power who had the greatest stake in the Pill Pavilion was exactly the Eastern Tang royal family, the one with the greatest speaking power naturally being the King himself. However, Zhao Shilie also had an relatively huge share of the pie.

Bringing precious medicines to the world, the Pill Pavilion was an extremely profitable business, even having begun jostling into the other markets in the East Heaven Region.

The others jumped simultaneously. A small competition having such big stakes; wasn't this a little too hasty?

But considering it carefully, with Yan Zhaoge's background, what other things of Zhao Shilie would he even set his eyes on?

Thinking about it from this perspective, their minds all relaxed, though they just couldn't help but feel within their hearts: Having such a mighty father, must really be comfortable...

"As for my wager, I believe that Your Highness Jin will also be very interested in it." Saying thus, he waved his hand, the low-grade spirit artifact, the Radiant Sun Wheel, appearing before him.

Zhao Shilie immediately exclaimed, "Xiao Shen's Radiant Sun Wheel?!"

Everyone else was also extremely startled, "The Sacred Sun Clan's Xiao Shen's protective spirit artifact? How is it....."

How was it that it was in Yan Zhaoge's hands?

Unless...

Yan Zhaoge said calmly, "Xiao Shen was defeated by me, and this thing of his naturally became my spoils of battle. If I use it to gamble with Your Highness Jin, I guess it should be worthy

enough?”

Zhao Shilie’s breathing became rough. Even though he was already a Martial Grandmaster, a spirit artifact was still a precious treasure extremely hard to come by.

His share in the Eastern Tang’s economic lifeline, to him, had not just its economic value, but also concerned the long-standing problem of the future King.

It was hard to accurately say which one of the two was more valuable.

However, that that spirit artifact of Xiao Shen’s had landed in Yan Zhaoge’s hands would definitely be a massive humiliation for the former.

If Zhao Shilie were to successfully get it back for him, it would definitely be doing him a great favour. Xiao Shen aside, behind him still stood the Sacred Sun Clan’s Grand Elder.

It was only that looking at how Yan Zhaoge, even knowing how proficient Zhao Hao was at alchemy, had still dared to propose these stakes, Zhao Shilie could naturally feel a warning bell sounding within his heart.

How much confidence was required to face this head on?

Zhao Shilie’s senses told him that it was best not to carry on the

gamble with Yan Zhaoge.

The others all stared at Yan Zhaoge shell-shocked. Never would they had thought that Xiao Shen, who was already in the late outer aura stage, would actually be defeated by Yan Zhaoge.

The only exception was Zhao Hao. As if not having completely realised what Yan Zhaoge's offering up of Xiao Shen's Radiant Sun Wheel meant, he still faintly had an expression of total disregard for everything on his face.

Maybe he did understand what it meant, but still didn't put it into his eyes...

Perhaps he did also understand that Zhao Shilie was intentionally making use of him, just that he similarly didn't care about that as well; there would naturally come a time when he repayed him in the future.

Zhao Hao looked at Yan Zhaoge as he let out a cold snort, "Hmphh, Broad Creed Mountain, someone originating from Broad Creed Mountain...Hehe!"

"Royal Uncle Jin, since he wants to gamble, let's just gamble then." Zhao Hao said calmly, before, with a flick of his sleeve, a small, intricate pill furnace directly landed on the ground before him.

From within the pill furnace, embers of flame sprang out without

warning, some faint green smoke rising into the air, actually gradually coming together to form the image of mountains and rivers.

Seeing this scene, their minds almost all drew a blank.

Mr Wang, however, abruptly opened his eyes wide.

Zhao Shilie's eyes just brightened.

“Talented, wilful, wildly arrogant; however...” Yan Zhaoge let out a slight smile from the corner of his mouth, “... however, he's stupid.”

“Unluckily for you, though, little fella, I also just happen to possess that kind of bad temper that does what I want when I'm not satisfied.”

HSSB 53: The Expert Reborn

“The smoke of the pill furnace taking form?” Old Mr Wang stared at the little pill furnace on the ground, his eyes opened wide, “This is a phenomenon that only appears when one’s skill in alchemy has reached the point of perfection ah.”

His skill in alchemy was steadily amongst the top three in the Eastern Tang Kingdom, but even he could only cause such a phenomenon whilst concocting pills once in a while, and only by coincidence.

It was only after quite some time had passed that he suddenly raised his head, looking towards Zhao Hao, “Earlier in the Pill Pavilion, you didn’t reveal all of your ability?”

Zhao Hao laughed arrogantly, “Now, it might also not be everything ah.”

Old Mr Wang coughed a little, before continuing to press him, “Previously, on asking about Sixteenth Prince’s Master, Sixteenth Prince had always been unwilling to answer; could you reveal it to me now?”

“This old man has no other intentions, just wishing to meet that expert once.”

Zhao Hao said mildly, “I already said it earlier. No one taught me to concoct pills; I just learnt it for myself through experimentation. It is up to you whether or not you want to believe

me.”

Having been spoken so rudely against and contradicted, Old Man Wang was not angered.

He only continuously shook his head, sighing, “If Sixteenth Prince does not wish to tell me, this old man will also not make things make difficult for you.”

He turned his head, looking towards Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng whereupon he sighed, “Having personally coached Eldest Prince and Third Prince before, their skill in alchemy is something that this old man knows very well.”

“Amongst those of a similar age, they can be considered superior, only...sigh!”

Old Mr Wang did not finish his words, but what he had left unsaid, everyone knew.

He looked at Yan Zhaoge somewhat like it was intentional, but also somewhat like it was not.

As this Elder saw it, having already said things to this point, he had actually already given Yan Zhaoge an extremely obvious hint.

If Zhao Yuan competed in the dao of alchemy with Zhao Hao, there was no way he would win. If Yan Zhaoge still insisted on continuing with the gamble, it would be as good as him freely

gifting Zhao Shilie the Radiant Sun Wheel for nothing.

As old Mr Wang saw it, let alone Zhao Yuan, even if Yan Zhaoge himself personally competed, he would also definitely be unable to win against Zhao Hao.

After all, he had never heard of Yan Zhaoge being proficient in alchemy before this.

As one of the Sacred Grounds of the current world, Broad Creed Mountain naturally did not lack great alchemists.

With the legacies he had received, perhaps Yan Zhaoge did have a few tricks up his sleeve, but winning against Zhao Hao-the chances of that happening were just far too slim.

This was because according to his predictions, aside from a few techniques that he was temporarily unable to use because of his cultivation currently being too low, Zhao Hao's alchemy skills was already sufficient to compete with any one of the current world's alchemy grandmasters.

Yan Zhaoge momentarily fell silent, seemingly hesitating, before he raised his head to look at Zhao Shilie, "What does Your Highness Jin think?"

Zhao Shilie narrowed his eyes before he slowly said, "If there are festivities to help liven up the occasion, this competition would naturally be more meaningful. If Zhaoge insists on the gamble, this

Prince will just go along with it then.”

Staring at him, Yan Zhaoge suddenly broke into a smile, “Alright, let’s do it then.”

Looking at Yan Zhaoge’s smile, Zhao Shilie vaguely felt as though something was wrong.

After pondering for a time, he said, “What you will be competing in will be pill concocting techniques and skills, and not who has obtained unique or precious pills or pill formulas.”

“You can all just concoct a simple kind of pill simultaneously.”

“The overall judging criteria will be the quality of the concocted pill, the speed of concoction, and then the amount of medicinal dregs that are left behind, in that order.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, knowing that Zhao Shilie had said this because he was afraid of him providing Zhao Yuan with one of Broad Creed Mountain’s secret pills in order to help him get through this trial.

His worries weren’t ungrounded; however, Yan Zhaoge didn’t actually need to make use of Broad Creed Mountain’s pills.

The pill formulas he had learnt from the Divine Palace’s collection had been many, and amongst those were many of the most efficacious pills and wonderful medicines.

But even from the start, Yan Zhaoge had also never intended to use such a method.

Zhao Hao, on the other hand, retained the same uncaring attitude, “Whatever; even if it is comparing whose final medicinal product is of a higher grade, I’d still go along with it.”

Hearing his words, Zhao Shilie glanced over at him.

While this kid had gradually caused him to feel threatened, more than that, he just seemed like a fat goat to be fleeced.

Yan Zhaoge gave Zhao Hao a sideways glance, thinking, “As I thought, you were indeed the one who spread the Smoke Cloud Powder.”

Although it was a little strange and he could not completely confirm it yet, the more Yan Zhaoge looked at it, the more Zhao Hao’s figure corresponded with that of a person who had already long since been buried by history and turned into a legend.

Wild and arrogant, unwilling to be under others, acting outrageously without fear of anything whatsoever, his fangs bared wide.

A Martial Saint of days long past, proficient in both alchemy and the sword, the Pill Fire Divine Sword Gao Zhe.

Undoubtedly, the Smoke Cloud Powder which had suddenly appeared in the markets of the Eastern Tang originated from Zhao Hao.

Because of his dealings with the Pill Pavilion, Zhao Shilie, from old Mr Wang, had managed to find out about the superb alchemy skills which Zhao Hao possessed.

Thinking about it, the King of the Eastern Tang would definitely know about this as well.

However, as he saw it, another one of his sons turning out to be so talented was naturally a good thing, and something to be happy about.

Currently, they believed maybe that Zhao Hao had had a fortuitous encounter, or even that he had been hiding his talents all along.

However, they probably would not have thought that within the shell of this Sixteenth Prince who had all along been completely ordinary, there now probably resided another soul.

A reincarnated Martial Saint expert.

“....But, why I do feel that he’s so stupid?” Yan Zhaoge was a little speechless, feeling extremely curious at this.

Because he had long grown used to being above all others in his

later years, he had been unable to adjust to the differences brought about by his change in identity and adapt to the situation before him?

Or was it that he just didn't want to adapt to it at all?

But truly, he was really being stupid...

Yes, the Pill Fire Divine Sword was wild and unbridled in his younger years. But, having been able to walk to such heights, he shouldn't be such a stupid person, right?

However, to me, the stupider you are the better.

In truth, Yan Zhaoge didn't actually care much about whether Gao Zhe had really reincarnated.

It was just that from the rumours, the relationship between him and Broad Creed Mountain had not been so good.

From Zhao Hao's earlier speech and actions, Yan Zhaoge had also vaguely felt this.

His currently standing on the same side as Zhao Shilie in looking for trouble should also be due to this.

Although he didn't understand why exactly he was doing so, since the other party dared to find trouble with him, Yan Zhaoge

completely didn't mind slapping him back!

“Earlier, we had already agreed that what we would be testing would be both sides' pill concocting abilities. Naturally, it won't have to do with the grade of the medicinal pill and things like pill formulas anymore,” Yan Zhaoge smiled mildly, “Let's begin immediately then.”

Zhao Hao was not polite as he just opened his pill furnace to begin his concoction even before the other two had made their preparations.

That smoke which resembled mountains and rivers converged, resembling a real entity as it carried the medical ingredients, slowly bringing them within the furnace. All of it seemed so illusory, as if it was all in a dream.

Zhao Hao began his concoction, as smoke began rising unceasingly from within his pill cauldron, the image of mountains and rivers once again manifesting above it.

Everyone could see the mountains and the sea changing, as though the vast sea had instantly turned into an endless plain.

Before everyone could regather their spirits, Zhao Hao slapped at the air, as all the smoke withdrew back into the pill furnace once again.

The next moment, the fire within the furnace was extinguished.

They all stared blankly, “It’s over already?!”

Zhao Hao’s gaze swept over Yan Zhaoge, Zhao Shilie and old Mr Wang as he just said dismissively, “You should go check it; it’s better to confirm the product.”

His gaze lingered on Yan Zhaoge for a little longer, as the ridicule within the depths of his gaze grew.

The pill that Zhao Hao had concocted was one of the most ordinary pills on the market, the Treatment Pill. After the Smoke Cloud Powder had appeared, the demand for this kind of pill had plummeted considerably.

Still, Zhao Shilie and old Man Wang were both shocked after checking the pill. The efficacy of the Treatment Pill that Zhao Hao had concocted had actually almost caught up to that of the Cloud Wind Powder!

Old Mr Wang sighed; the Smoke Cloud Powder that the Pill Pavilion was currently selling was also divided into different levels of quality.

The very best ones, were always the ones that Zhao Hao regularly came over to concoct.

As for the Treatment Pill that Zhao Hao had just concocted, its efficacy was almost already on the same level as the Smoke Cloud

Powder that others could produce. At this, the Elder couldn't help but sigh in admiration and wonder once again.

Meanwhile, Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng had overcast expressions on their face.

They couldn't directly admit defeat, because they really didn't have that face to lose. However, if they were to go on with the competition, the final result would only be more embarrassing for them.

Zhao Yuan unconsciously looked towards Yan Zhaoge, but could still only feel a sense of desolation.

Even under the assumption that Yan Zhaoge could win against Zhao Hao in the area of alchemy, it was not like he could get the former to participate in the competition in his place.

And in alchemy, it was also not like giving a few pointers through words alone could instantly raise one's proficiency by a few tiers.

No matter how he looked at it, he had no hope of winning this competition at all...

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly, as he sent over a sound transmission with his aura-qi. After listening to it, Zhao Yuan's eyes gradually began to brighten.

HSSB 54: Even A Draw Will Count As My Loss!

Seeing Zhao Yuan walk towards the pill furnace, Yan Zhaoge looked at Zhao Hao, stroking his lower jaw, “If I weren’t here today, Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng would be destined to have their face beaten here.”

“And it would be beating first the right side, then the left side.”

“Following that, due to various strange and unusual reasons, they’d probably gradually end up as a stepping stone for Zhao Hao.”

Yan Zhaoge drew back the corners of his mouth, “Alchemy requires talent as well as experience; even for me, it would indeed be impossible to help someone to make such speedy gains.”

“And it would be even more impossible for me to take to the field myself, going to face this Zhao Hao head-on for real while unprepared.”

“If I did that, regardless of who the eventual victory were to go to, it would also end up growing Zhao Hao’s face.”

“Still, do you think that I will have my back pushed against the wall from just this?”

Under Yan Zhaoge's guidance, Zhao Yuan did not pull out his own pill furnace, nor did he walk towards Zhao Hao's. Instead, he walked before old Mr Wang.

“Elder Wang, could you pass Sixteenth Brother's Treatment Pill to me?”

Old Mr Wang frowned slightly, obviously unhappy, “Is it that Eldest Prince cannot trust this old man, thinking that this old man would help Sixteenth Prince out of bias?”

With a slight smile on his face, Zhao Yuan shook his head, “It's naturally not that; please do not misunderstand, Elder Wang. I only very simply wish to see the medicinal pill that Sixteenth Prince concocted.”

Elder Wang looked at Yan Zhaoge and Zhao Shilie for a time, before finally handing over the Treatment Pill to Zhao Yuan.

He sighed, “The time used was short; as for the efficacy of the medicine, let's not talk about that. Just look at the bottom of the interior of his pill furnace; there are no medicinal dregs there at all. All the medicinal ingredients were made use of perfectly, without any wastage having occurred whatsoever.”

As the words left his mouth, everyone's hearts sunk.

Zhao Hao had already attained perfection in all of the three areas to be judged. Even if Zhao Yuan erupted strongly to perform above

his level now, it would still only be a draw at most, unless the efficacy of the Treatment Pill he concocted turned out to be superior to that of Zhao Hao.

But would that really still be a Treatment Pill?

Zhao Yuan's expression didn't change, as he carefully appraised the Treatment Pill within his hand.

Finally, he turned to look at Zhao Hao, "Sixteenth Brother's skill in alchemy is indeed superb."

Zhao Hao only said mildly, "What does Eldest Brother wish to say?"

Zhao Yuan said neither quickly nor slowly, "Sixteenth Brother's alchemy skills are superb, even being able to cause the smoke of the pill furnace to take form. To this, even Eldest Brother has to admit my admiration."

"However, the dao of alchemy is vast and profound; the number of techniques it contains as boundless as an ocean..."

Zhao Hao broke him off directly, "There are indeed many alchemical techniques, but what you can do, I can do too, and what you can't do, I can also do."

"Such words don't have to be said, just directly move on to your main point."

Having been cut off by him, Zhao Yuan was also not angered, as he still said slowly and leisurely, “That is some nice spirit you have there, Sixteenth Brother. In that case, Eldest Brother will display his meagre skills today.”

“By chance, I managed to learn a little of a strange and wondrous alchemical technique. Today, I’ll just try it out then.”

“As for you, Sixteenth Brother, you don’t have you prove yourself to be stronger than me; as long as you are able to perform the same technique, today, Eldest Brother will lower my head in defeat.”

“What does Sixteenth Brother think?”

Hearing his words, Zhao Hao looked first at Zhao Yuan, then at Yan Zhaoge with a barely masked look of ridicule on his face.

“A strange and wondrous technique? Haha, this old man once spent half of his entire lifetime in the Eight Extremities World collecting every single bit of the remnant traces of alchemy from before the Great Calamity as well as the alchemical techniques created by experts in the field after the Calamity itself.”

“Other than the few Sacred Grounds’ speciality pill formulas and concoction techniques, as long as it is something that has to do with alchemy, there is nothing under these heavens that I do not know.”

“While your Broad Creed Mountain’s alchemy indeed has its unique areas, none of it is something that can be grasped by someone of Zhao Yuan’s foundation.”

“As for other abstruse techniques obtained by chance or coincidence? Hehe, those were what this old man discarded after growing tired of playing with in the past.”

Zhao Hao laughed uncaringly, “Even a draw, will count as my loss!”

Zhao Yuan smiled slightly as he nodded his head. Then, he suddenly took out a golden needle which he promptly stabbed into the Treatment Pill.

Seeing this, everyone was stunned, not understanding Zhao Yuan’s actions at all.

It was only Zhao Hao and old Mr Wang within whose eyes a totally shocked expression could be seen.

Zhao Yuan wielded the needle with speed and ease, stabbing it into the Treatment Pill nine consecutive times, following which a faint mist actually began to emanate from the pill where the needle had stabbed it.

Upon seeing this, everyone was stunned. They naturally knew that this mist was the work of Zhao Yuan. But, the pill was not a

balloon; how then could there be a gas being emitted from within it?

Having finished all this, Zhao Yuan now returned the medicinal pill to old Mr Wang, “Elder Wang, please reexamine the pill.”

Old Mr Wang sucked in a deep breath, and checked the pill. After doing so, he fell into a deep silence, seemingly trying to remember something as he pondered.

Without saying a thing, he passed the pill over to Prince Jin who was standing beside him. After taking a look, Zhao Shilie’s eyebrows instantly twitched.

“The remnant furnace smoke within the pill all disappeared, and the efficacy of the pill increased a tier further, thus actually truly achieving the maximum possible efficacy of the Treatment Pill that can only be achieved in theory?!”

“But, how?!”

Old Mr Wang let out a long breath, looking towards Zhao Yuan as his body actually slightly trembled, “Forgive this old man’s old blinded eyes. This technique of Eldest Prince’s, is it the Golden Needle Liberating Pill technique?”

Zhao Yuan smiled as he nodded, “Elder Wang’s eyes are discerning indeed; that was indeed the Golden Needle Liberating Pill technique.

Old Mr Wang's body trembled no longer, as, looking towards the skies, he let out a long sigh, his heart satisfied to the extreme, "I never thought that in my lifetime, this old man would actually be able to see a supreme alchemical technique that originates from before the Great Calamity. This life has not been lived in vain!"

Zhao Shilie, Zhao Sheng and the others were all stunned by his words, "Elder Wang..."

After having calmed his emotions, Elder Wang said, "The Golden Needle Liberating Pill technique can completely dispel the remnant furnace smoke within a pill, and greatly increase its efficacy as a result."

"This was one of the top alchemical techniques in the era before the Great Calamity, having long since been lost. Now, only a simple written record of it remains; it is just like a legend."

Zhao Yuan now looked towards Zhao Hao, saying in a manner that was neither quick nor slow, "I have only the tiniest bit of skill in it; please excuse my incompetent performance."

There had erupted a shocking light within Zhao Hao's gaze, but it was directed not towards Zhao Yuan, but, rather, straight at Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge looked at Zhao Hao, seeming peaceful whilst actually letting out a wicked smile, "Personality determines destiny; I just love to deal with this kind of stupid youth who likes to act cool just

like me.”

Zhao Sheng’s gaze had also fallen on Yan Zhaoge as in a lowered voice, he ordered a guard beside him to bring him a Treatment Pill, as well as a golden needle.

He observed the Treatment Pill Zhao Yuan had treated, trying to deduce the right angle and position. Then, he similarly stabbed nine needles into the Treatment Pill he had.

There was no reaction whatsoever.

“There is indeed a special technique; that success was in no way coincidental!” Zhao Sheng exclaimed with a disappointed sigh.

Zhao Yuan smiled as he looked at Zhao Sheng. Taking out another fresh Treatment Pill, he did as he had done before.

Fog was once again emitted into the air.

Zhao Shilie’s gaze repeatedly moved between Yan Zhaoge and Zhao Yuan, before he suddenly asked, “It works with the Treatment Pill, but what about this Smoke Cloud Powder?”

One of the guards behind him hurriedly presented him with a packet of medicinal powder, within which was contained the Smoke Cloud Powder.

At this, Zhao Yuan's gaze hardened slightly.

“It's fine. Just use your aura-qi to cause the powder to coalesce and form a pill, before stabbing in nine needles as per my instructions.” Listening to the relaxed Yan Zhaoge's sound transmission, Zhao Yuan also calmed down instantly.

He took the Smoke Cloud Powder and grabbed towards it with his aura-qi, as the medicinal powder instantly coalesced into the form of a pill.

Zhao Shilie stared as he followed Zhao Yuan's every movement closely. Although the medicinal powder was currently in the form of a pill, it was actually still a powder. This was totally different from the Treatment Pill from before.

But Zhao Yuan stabbed in nine needles, and fog once again rose from within.

The fog actually split into two, one portion black, the other white. The blackness dissipated within the air, while the whiteness returned within the pill formed of the Smoke Cloud Powder.

After having checked its efficacy, old Mr Wang was full of praises. Zhao Shilie completely didn't say anything at all, just turning to look over at Zhao Hao.

Zhao Hao's gaze was finally no longer as cocksure and arrogant as before. Rather, he now had a grave and serious look on his face.

Without saying anything, Zhao Hao also got out a packet of Smoke Cloud Powder, coalescing it into a pill as he asked Zhao Yuan for a golden needle.

He did not start immediately, just furrowing his brows as he carefully considered how best to proceed on this matter.

After a long time, he finally began.

The first needle, nothing...

The second needle, nothing...

The third needle...

The fourth needle...

The fifth...

“Peng!”

The pill formed of the Smoke Cloud Powder exploded in its entirety, filling the surrounding area with smoke and dust.

HSSB 55: Zhao Hao, A Good Person

Zhao Sheng didn't understand the technique at all; all of his nine needles had been useless, only serving to add nine small holes on the surface of the pill.

Zhao Hao, however, whilst stabbing his needle in, had also tried to shock the pill with his inner qi, in an attempt to achieve the desired effect.

Sadly for him, while he had performed better in this aspect than Zhao Sheng had, he still hadn't been able to succeed in the Golden Needle Liberating Pill technique.

Zhao Hao just stood there silently, neither moving backwards to avoid the smoke and dust nor waving his hands to blow it away.

This resulted in the all-pervading smoke and dust falling onto his entire body, as his head turned completely white and his face was also covered by a layer of soot, making for a very comical sight.

Seeing him like this, the martial practitioners under Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng who had not been able to stand his earlier unbridled arrogance all couldn't help but laugh out loud.

While Zhao Hao's face was full of soot, his eyes currently resembled a wolf's as he stared at Yan Zhaoge.

At this moment, his gaze was no longer filled with contempt and

disdain as he now viewed Yan Zhaoge with resentment and hostility.

It was no longer a resentment and hostility directed towards Broad Creed Mountain; rather, it was completely directed at Yan Zhaoge himself.

Directed at the youth before him, whom he had never put in his eyes before.

Yan Zhaoge, however, maintained his usual expression, as, not looking at Zhao Hao at all, he instead saluted Zhao Shilie, “All thanks to His Highness Jin’s suggestion, this has been a splendid contest indeed.”

Seeing Yan Zhaoge completely disregard his own existence, Zhao Hao’s pupils contracted slightly.

Sometimes, disregard was even worse than contempt.

Zhao Hao had all along been a person who became more unbridled the more unbridled others were. Now, how could he bear being totally disregarded by Yan Zhaoge?

His gaze instantly turned even deeper than before.

“Does Sixteenth Brother want to try a few more times?” Zhao Yuan’s voice, seemingly holding kind intentions, now sounded by his ear.

Zhao Hao shut his eyes, his hands secretly clenching tightly into fists as his fingernails dug into the flesh of his palm.

From that single attempt just now, he had already discovered that the Golden Needle Liberating Pill technique was not something that could be learnt through mere observation alone.

Even while his level of skill in alchemy presided over the vast majority of people in this world, this was not something that could be learnt from a mere few experiments alone.

Zhao Yuan looked at Zhao Hao, saying mildly, “Looks like Sixteenth Brother doesn’t intend to continue making any further attempts? Then, the results of this competition of ours; what do you say?”

Zhao Hao’s body shook.

Opening his eyes, he didn’t even look at Zhao Yuan at all as he just stared straight at Yan Zhaoge, “I’ve always been hunting sparrows, yet today had my eye pecked out by my own bird...”

Sucking in a deep breath, he opened his mouth, “It’s my loss this time.”

Zhao Hao looked at Zhao Yuan a little coldly, not bothering to say anything more.

He was completely sure that he would have won if he had asked Zhao Yuan to concoct a Treatment Pill himself. Let alone being able to compete with him, Zhao Yuan's final product wouldn't even have been worthy of carrying the proverbial shoes for his own Treatment Pill.

However, he had already declared earlier that what Zhao Yuan could do, he, Zhao Hao, could do even better; if the former could prove otherwise, it would count as his loss.

The result now, however, was that what Zhao Yuan had been able to do, he had failed in doing.

Although, it was definitely impossible that that had been the real ability of that Zhao Yuan. He had definitely been guided by Yan Zhaoge, sending over sound transmissions via his aura-qi.

Zhao Hao snorted coldly, directly saying, "That person who was killed by me earlier didn't have much useful information to speak of."

"There was only one thing: the scope of their organisation is extremely large. It does not only encompass the Eastern Tang, nor does it only cover the East Heaven Region."

"At the very least, there is also a gathering point for them in the North Heaven Region, just that he didn't possess any more concrete information regarding it."

Standing by the side, Yan Zhaoge heard all this and committed it to memory. However, his line of vision still fell on Zhao Shilie.

Waving his hand, he kept the Radiant Sun Wheel. As the spiritual glow faded, the light within Zhao Shilie's gaze also visibly dimmed somewhat.

“When we've returned to the Eastern Tang capital, I'll still have to disturb Your Highness Jin.” Yan Zhaoge said with a very peaceful smile on his face.

Zhao Shilie looked first at Zhao Hao, next at Zhao Yuan, then at Yan Zhaoge, the expression on his face consecutively changing a few times before he forced himself to laugh, “Zhaoge coming to visit; this Prince naturally welcomes it.”

He looked towards Zhao Yuan, saying in a heavy tone, “Royal Nephew Yuan has actually become familiar with an ancient alchemical technique originating from before the Great Calamity; this is a cause for celebration indeed.”

“However, when do you intend to widen its use? Such a technique would be sufficient in allowing the quality of the pills and medicines produced in my Eastern Tang to rise to a whole new level ah.”

Zhao Yuan cupped his hands in a respectful gesture, “What Royal Uncle Jin says is true. Still, your nephew is barely proficient in the technique, and is currently still in the process of analysing and working it out. I intended to at least gain a small level of

attainment in it first before reporting the matter to Royal Father.”

“On returning to the capital this time, I naturally will report it to Royal Father.”

“Perhaps the Pill Pavilion will first experiment on widening its use? Regardless, I’ll just leave it for Royal Father to decide.”

Hearing his words, Zhao Shilie’s eyebrows instantly twitched, as he was almost unable to suppress the flames of fury burning within his heart.

The Pill Pavilion’s momentum had originally already been rising due to the Smoke Cloud Powder, and now, it seemed like it was going to rise by yet another level.

With that rate of development, it could be foreseen that it would soon surpass its competitors to become one of the supporting pillars of the Eastern Tang Kingdom.

But, it would soon no longer have any relation to him...

Zhao Shilie sighed. He had still unconsciously underestimated Yan Zhaoge after all.

He was a Martial Grandmaster; even his own son was older than Yan Zhaoge.

Although in recent days, Yan Zhaoge had performed many feats which had become widely known, allowing others to see his enormous strength as well as potential in the martial dao, never would Zhao Shilie have thought that he would also be able to suppress Zhao Hao in the area of alchemy.

As old Mr Wang had said, Zhao Hao's skill in alchemy could already be considered superb within the entire Eight Extremities World.

While the difference between martial practitioners' skill in alchemy was also related to the level of their cultivation, the relation in question was still not as strict as with the forging of artifacts.

To a certain extent, it was a completely different field of study. To be proficient in it, not only talent but also a lot of time and effort was required.

As Zhao Shilie saw it, for Yan Zhaoge to have achieved such high attainments in the martial dao, he must naturally have focused on it single-mindedly to the utmost degree, in this way using up the bulk of his time and effort.

Even if his talent in alchemy was unordinary, where would he have the time to concentrate on it?

If it was only that he had just happened to obtain and understand that ancient secret technique by chance, it would still be acceptable. However, if Yan Zhaoge really had a profound

knowledge of all the aspects of alchemy, it would really be terrifying to the extent of being beyond belief.

Zhao Shilie could be considered a person who had encountered many huge winds and waves in his lifetime, but currently, he could still feel his common sense collapsing completely.

His expression continuously changed, before finally warping into a bitter smile.

Zhao Yuan also silently sent over a sound transmission at this time, “I really have to thank you, Zhaoge, this time. Before this, I had never considered that my Sixteenth Brother might be concealing himself so deeply.”

“Today’s debt; I will definitely repay it generously.”

“Afterwards, when Royal Father asks about the Golden Needle Liberating Pill technique, I will still require you to be there.”

Yan Zhaoge replied, “At that time, I will naturally discuss it with Royal Uncle. You can rest easy; under the condition that the number of people in the know are kept to a limited few, the Pill Pavilion can use this technique.”

“I understand,” Zhao Yuan understood his meaning completely, “You can rest easy; we will definitely not let Broad Creed Mountain lose out.”

Standing beside Yan Zhaoge, Feng Yunsheng asked, “It was you who helped that Eastern Tang’s Eldest Prince, right?”

Restraining his facial expression, Yan Zhaoge just said, “Hehe, low-key, low-key.”

“Good, good, good. Low-key, low-key, you’re the most low-key,” Feng Yunsheng couldn’t help but laugh as she shook her head.

Then, curious, she asked, “However, such a secret technique; your Broad Creed Mountain won’t be keeping it for yourself? Just giving it to the Eastern Tang Kingdom like that. Although, I’ve heard that your father and the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom are extremely close friends.”

Yan Zhaoge glanced at her, “You should be saying ‘Our Broad Creed Mountain’ instead.”

Actually, Feng Yunsheng had not been officially accepted into the clan. It was only that Yan Zhaoge had agreed to speak for her; in truth, she wasn’t even sure about what Broad Creed Mountain’s attitude towards her actually was.

However, on hearing his words, Feng Yunsheng beamed as she laughed, “You’re right. It’s my fault; it’s our Broad Creed Mountain.”

“Mmm, that’s much more pleasing to the ear, ” Yan Zhaoge nodded in satisfaction, before saying, “Relax, I already prepared

for the matter of the Golden Needle Liberating Pill technique beforehand with my father; the clan knows as well.”

“If we want to jostle out the Sacred Sun Clan as well as the Infinite Boundless Mountain out of the Eastern Tang, we will naturally have to pour in some resources.”

“Today’s incident notwithstanding, this had also been considered and arranged for.”

“It was because of that that I wanted to swallow Zhao Shilie’s share of the Pill Pavilion.”

Yan Zhaoge snapped his fingers, “Only that before this, I had never thought that it would go as easily and smoothly as this.”

Finally giving Zhao Hao a glance, Yan Zhaoge smiled very wickedly, “What a good person; thanks a lot yo.”

HSSB 56: The Red Flower Withers

Lin Yushao lay on her back, gazing dazedly at the clear blue sky.

The blue sky was the same as it always was, with leisurely white clouds floating dreamily about.

However, her clothes which had been as white as snow were currently covered with dust, their colour having dimmed as they lay scattered on the ground.

There was a huge wound located between her chest and abdomen, from which no fresh blood was actually flowing. Rather, it was actually jet black all over as it resembled burnt charcoal that had been charred after use.

The young girl no longer exhibited any signs of life whatsoever.

As she lay dying, the scene of what had happened just now once again surfaced before her eyes, as that furious voice from before could still faintly be heard resounding within her ears.

“They said that you heavily injured junior apprentice-brother Lan. Just why did you do that; what happened?”

“That bastard Yan Zhaoge harmed me time and time again. Lan Wenyan is one of his dogs; in leaving him alive, I was already being merciful!”

“There should be a misunderstanding somewhere; let’s return to the clan together to explain things clearly to the Elders...”

“If I returned to the clan now, it would be like walking right into a trap; do you wish for me to die in the hands of that dog Zhao father-and-son combo?”

“I only...”

“I’ll ask one last time. Will you leave with me, or will you go to look for Yan Zhaoge?”

“Ye Jing, calm yourself down a little. I’ve talked with senior apprentice-brother Yan a few times before, and he has no intention of specifically targeting you; there must be a misunderstanding somewhere.”

“...If you’re not on my side, then you’re someone on Yan Zhaoge’s side. And someone on Yan Zhaoge’s side, is someone who is my enemy!”

Up till now, the shock and bewilderment within Lin Yushao’s eyes had still yet to completely fade.

Never would she have thought that her unexpected reunion with Ye Jing after such a long time would actually turn out to have such an ending.

Lin Yushao’s gaze gradually slackened, as her face was instead

filled with an expression of release.

“Maybe from that moment I left for Broad Creed Mountain along with senior apprentice-brother Yan, all this had already been destined to happen?”

“This is just my fate...I guess?”

This day, the red flower that had yet to truly reach full bloom, withered.

.....

Outside the Eastern Tang Kingdom's Overlooking Abyss City, in the wilderness close to the Sealing Dragon Abyss and the Luliao Mountains, there stood an old man, his hands behind his back.

“Lin Yushao?” The old man turned his head to look at the person behind him, “This old man remembers; it was that female disciple who was entangled with both Yan Zhaoge and Ye Jing, right?”

The old man was none other than Broad Creed Mountain's Principal Elder in the Eastern Tang, Yan Xu.

The martial practitioner behind him nodded his head, “That's right, and she was also a somewhat promising young disciple. Sadly, when she was discovered, she had already passed away, and there was no longer any way to save her.”

“Could you tell who did it?”

“We were unable to concretely determine who the killer was; we were only able to deduce that the person in question must be cultivating in a martial art that holds an extraordinarily strong power of fire.”

Yan Xu asked, “In coming to the Eastern Tang, was it to search for Yan Zhaoge, or for Ye Jing?”

That martial practitioner shook his head, saying, “This subordinate was unable to confirm this, but it was most likely for Yan Zhaoge.”

“From what this subordinate knows, when on the road to the Eastern Tang, Lin Yushao had already learnt of the news of Ye Jing having made it out alive from the Sealing Dragon Abyss.”

“Moreover, she had followed Yan Zhaoge previously after all; if she knew what was good for her, she would have kept a distance from that Ye Jing.”

“Before, when it was unknown whether Ye Jing was alive or dead, being concerned about him would still be fine, only being natural. Now that she had known that Ye Jing was still alive, however, in still coming to the Eastern Tang, it should probably be because she had come for Yan Zhaoge all along.”

Here, the martial practitioner hesitated slightly.

Yan Xu asked mildly, “What?”

That martial practitioner answered, “It’s some rumours that have yet to be confirmed. According to these rumours, after Yan Zhaoge arrived in the Eastern Tang, he began walking rather close with another female disciple of our clan, Sikong Qing.”

“Could it be that Lin Yushao felt that her own position had been threatened? After all, she and Yan Zhaoge were not actually engaged. You know, young people; for their thoughts to change a little is also normal.”

Hearing his words, Yan Xu fell into a deep silence as he did not speak.

It was only after quite some time had passed that he answered, “Take this old man to look at that female disciple’s corpse.”

As he saw the wound on Lin Yushao, Yan Xu pondered deeply for a long time, before suddenly extending his own palm.

As his aura-qi began to surge, his palm turned purplish red, as though a clump of real, purple flames had agglomerated within.

This was exactly Broad Creed Mountain’s direct lineage martial art, one of the Eight Extreme Arts, the Tushita Palm.

His face expressionless, Yan Xu pressed his palm on Lin Yushao's wound.

The girl's corpse shuddered slightly, as the purple glow on the surface of her body vanished in a flash.

Yan Xu retracted his palm, before turning his head to look at that martial practitioner.

“Yan Zhaoge has also cultivated in the Tushita Palm...” that martial practitioner's heart skipped a bit, before he lowered his head, saying, “When this subordinate discovered Lin Yushao, she had already passed away, the identity of her killer a total mystery. However, when considering the fact that she died under our clan's Tushita Palm, the scope of the investigation can be narrowed greatly. This subordinate will go investigate immediately.”

Yan Xu nodded mildly, “Carry out a thorough investigation; although this Lin Yushao was but a white-clothed disciple, she was still a member of our clan. How can we let her die while not knowing what happened to her?”

“Other than that, carefully search around the area where this little girl's corpse was discovered; perhaps there will be traces of Ye Jing's whereabouts there.”

“It's fine if you don't find him; but if you do, bring him directly to see me, and do not let word of it spread. If there are any incriminating traces left behind, clean them up on the spot; do not

leave clues behind for anyone else.”

The martial practitioner’s heart stirred slightly as he bowed and replied, “Yes.”

.....

Within the Luliao Mountains, Yan Zhaoge’s group was currently in the midst of returning.

Yan Zhaoge pondered as he walked, on the news that he had obtained from Zhao Yuan, Zhao Hao and the others.

“They do not merely have a gathering point in the East Heaven Region; they have one in the North Heaven Region as well,” Yan Zhaoge calculated within his heart, “Doesn’t that also mean than other than the Ghost Hatchet Elder Han Sheng, this power also possesses other Martial Grandmaster experts?”

“If this power has a Martial Grandmaster like Han Sheng as its leading figure in the North Heaven Region, is it that Han Sheng and the others join hands in leading their respective squads, or is there still someone else even higher up in their organisation than them?”

Yan Zhaoge made a noise with his mouth, “They have people in the East Heaven Region and the North Heaven Region; what about other places then?”

“What about outside the Heaven Domain itself?”

Yan Zhaoge’s eyes narrowed into slits, “The East Heaven Region has the Sealing Dragon Abyss, while the North Heaven Region has the Infinite Shadowy River; both of these extend out from Hell...”

“The Ghost Hatchet Elder causing trouble in the Sealing Dragon Abyss for his own purposes; if others from this organisation really do make a move, it’s probable that their movements will also be related to Hell...”

Yan Zhaoge’s instincts told him that this was a little bad.

In the Eight Extremities World of after the Great Calamity, the first and foremost of the few significant things that could affect the balance of the world itself was the Earth Domain now turned Hell, as well as the invasion of the Fire Devil race.

It was no wonder that whenever things were related to Hell, everyone’s nerves would also be frazzled.

“Still, it’s good that they were exposed whilst moving in secret. This way, finding clues and leads on them will also be much easier.” Thinking thus, Yan Zhaoge’s gaze turned to fall on Zhao Hao, walking within the crowd.

“How should I deal with him? En, no matter what, I should also let Uncle Zhao know beforehand.” Yan Zhaoge curled his lips. Regardless of whether it was his father or his second apprentice-

uncle, neither would be happy to see a prince hostile to Broad Creed Mountain becoming the Eastern Tang Crown Prince, and by extension its next king as well.

As he pondered, a black-clothed martial practitioner suddenly drew over to report, “Young Master, urgent news.”

Yan Zhaoge raised his brows, “What, you’ve found Ye Jing?”

That martial practitioner shook his head, saying softly, “There’s been news from Overlooking Abyss City. Miss Lin Yushao, has been killed.”

“Eh?” On hearing the news, Yan Zhaoge could only find it absurd beyond compare.

HSSB 57: What The Public Loves To Hear

Lin Yushao leaving her seclusion, was something that Yan Zhaoge had already known about.

That Lin Yushao was coming to the Eastern Tang; this was also something that Yan Zhaoge had known about.

Even though this mess that his body's previous owner had left for him had caused some trouble for him in the past, Yan Zhaoge had never thought too much of it.

As for the reason she had come—regardless of whether it had been to find out the truth of Ye Jing's disappearance or to see Yan Zhaoge—it was not all that important.

Yet, Yan Zhaoge had never expected that Lin Yushao would actually perish.

And what's more, it wasn't some accidental mishap that caused her death. Some people had specifically set out to kill her.

Yan Zhaoge was stunned for a long time before he finally regained his wits, "It wasn't Xiao Shen or Chao Yuanlong, was it?"

This had been his first reaction after having heard the news of Lin Yushao's death. Still, since the black-clothed men who had reported back had not made any mention of the Sacred Sun Clan, it probably wasn't the case.

“...she met up with some fleeing expelled disciples?”

Even though this seemed a bit absurd, other than Xiao Shen being the culprit, it was the only plausible reason that Yan Zhaoge could think of.

Because as far as Yan Zhaoge was aware, Lin Yushao didn't have any blood enemies, or at least no one whom she had such an irreconcilable enmity with.

Even if it was an enemy of Yan Zhaoge trying to vent their hatred on Lin Yushao, there also weren't too many suspects other than the Sacred Sun Clan.

On the other hand, there were many adventurers who passed through the area around the Sealing Dragon Abyss. Out of all these adventurers, there were naturally some who were less than savory characters, being quite bloodthirsty.

Even though Lin Yushao was a Broad Creed Mountain disciple, it was possible that she might have met up with that sort of violent and carefree person who dared to kill even a Sacred Ground disciple.

In such a situation, one could only rely on their own cultivation and combat ability.

That black-clothed messenger shook his head, saying quietly,

“From our reports, it seemed like Miss Lin’s clothes were still orderly after she was killed; it didn’t look like she was violated in any way.”

Yan Zhaoge slowly knit his eyebrows together, as he began to form an idea of what could have happened.

Even though she had had a deep relationship with his body’s previous owner, the present Yan Zhaoge had actually never laid eyes on this Miss Lin.

He didn’t feel any deep sorrow over her death, but did feel a strong sense of pity.

After all, such a young person had perished so prematurely.

There was a long pause, before Yan Zhaoge sighed, “Let’s deal with it once we get back.”

The group slowly progressed forwards, until they finally emerged on the outside of the Luliao Mountains.

After passing out of the last canyon and heading out on the road towards Overlooking Abyss City, they came face to face with another group of Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners.

Upon seeing Yan Zhaoge, their leader couldn’t help but let out a strange expression as he greeted, “Junior apprentice-nephew Yan.”

Recognising him as one of Xu Chuan's subordinates, Yan Zhaoge nodded, "Is anything the matter?"

The man lowered his voice, "Elder Xu requests that you don't enter the city yet, and to meet him in a pavilion ten kilometres outside the city borders."

Yan Zhaoge remained calm: "There is no need. I'll have to trouble you to ask Elder Xu to come here directly and meet me. We can discuss matters as we walk—there's an urgent matter I have to attend to in the Eastern Tang capital."

The middle-aged man hesitated for a moment, before he nodded his head and departed.

Yan Zhaoge looked off into the distance, only to see someone observing his departure from the Luliao Mountains from far away. Immediately, the faraway observer fled.

It was obvious that this observer was reporting news of his whereabouts back to some other party.

Yan Zhaoge did nothing to obstruct him, as he continued to make his way towards his destination.

As members of the Eastern Tang royal family, Zhao Shilie and Zhao Yuan's statuses made it such that it would be difficult to hide any matters in the Eastern Tang from them that they wanted to

know about.

After sending out some people to scout, they quickly came back to report. After a while, there was a group of people assembled, all of whom bore a unique expression.

On the other hand, Zhao Hao stood unconcerned to the side, seemingly unfazed by anything.

Very quickly, an extremely worried Xu Chuan personally came from Overlooking Abyss City to meet Yan Zhaoge's group.

“Junior apprentice-nephew Yan has returned, along with Prince Jin, First Prince, Third Prince, and Sixteenth Prince.”

Xu Chuan immediately started off with the formal pleasantries, but quickly followed up with a sound transmission to Yan Zhaoge, “Junior apprentice-nephew Yan, junior apprentice-niece Lin Yushao has come to great harm. Have you heard?”

Yan Zhaoge's gaze flickered momentarily, before, with a sad expression on his face, he slowly nodded: “I've already heard about it; who was the one who did this heinous deed?”

Xu Chuan's expression seemed slightly bitter, “There were some rumors spreading about that it was actually junior apprentice-nephew Yan yourself who did it...”

Yan Zhaoge's eyebrows immediately knit together, “How could

that possibly be the case? Who's spreading this nonsense?"

"There's a rumor that your affection for her had dulled because of her long period of seclusion."

Xu Chuan was a crafty old fox. This rumor was even more intolerable, since it suggested that Yan Zhaoge had just been playing around with Lin Yushao. Naturally, Xu Chuan didn't dare to directly say this to Yan Zhaoge.

"The rumor also says that you became enamored with fellow disciple Sikong Qing."

Yan Zhaoge was incredulous, "I somehow left this type of impression on people?"

Xu Chuan shot a glance behind Yan Zhaoge, examining Feng Yunsheng, who was currently teasing the black dog.

Yan Zhaoge immediately put his hand to his forehead.

Xu Chuan didn't dare to keep provoking him, and dryly continued: "The rumor says that junior apprentice-niece Lin heard about your relationship with junior apprentice-niece Sikong, and that was the reason for which she set out for the Eastern Tang in the first place."

"After meeting, the two of you got into a dispute. Feeling vexed with junior apprentice-niece Lin, you decided to..."

Xu Chuan couldn't bear to continue, because Yan Zhaoge's expression had already become as black as a pot's bottom.

Yan Zhaoge humorlessly spoke, "This sort of baseless and ridiculous rumor, there are people who actually believe it?"

Xu Chuan let out a bitter laugh, "It's only that according to the rumor, junior apprentice-niece Lin died to a strike of the Tushita Palm."

Yan Zhaoge's pupils suddenly shrank, "The Tushita Palm?"

Xu Chuan nodded heavily, "The corpse was first discovered by Yan Xu's subordinates, and is still in their possession at the present time. For the time being, it will be difficult to get close to inspect the body."

"However, according to the rumours, her stomach was split open by an enormous wound, and her flesh and blood were entirely scorched. This had to have been from a flame-type martial art."

"But currently, word's out that Lin Yushao died by the Tushita Palm."

Xu Chuan observed Yan Zhaoge with some concern.

Of the martial practitioners who could use the Tushita Palm, Yan

Zhaoge was obviously not the only one. Even in the Eastern Tang, he was not the only one. However, amongst them, Yan Zhaoge was the only one with a possible motive.

Even though that motive was seemingly nonsensical, it was a disappointing truth that this kind of juicy gossip about a lover's feud was exactly the type of rumor that was most likely to be spread.

Under the scrutiny of the masses, it was inevitable that Yan Zhaoge's image would suffer a serious blow.

If it was just gossip about Yan Zhaoge's affections, that would be fine. After all, everyone loves stories about the hero seeking the heart of a beautiful maiden. However, this matter of illicit love and murder was a totally different beast altogether.

Especially this kind of rumor; even if it was cleared up later on, people still might not believe it.

Yan Zhaoge squinted his eyes.

The people purposely spreading this rumor might not just want to destroy his reputation; they might be planning something even bigger.

Yan Zhaoge had the vague feeling that was some kind of trap...

After considering for a moment, Yan Zhaoge shook his head,

“The death of junior apprentice-sister Lin really had nothing to do with me. Naturally, we will have to closely investigate the identity of the true killer.”

“However, I have an urgent matter that I have to attend to in the Eastern Tang capital which is relevant to the very foundation of our Broad Creed Mountain. I too am sorely saddened by the death of junior apprentice-sister Lin, but I can only put this matter aside for the moment and mourn later.”

“The East Elder is also hurrying to the capital, and I have to meet him there.”

Xu Chuan stared blankly. Originally, he had thought that Yan Zhaoge was just trying to avoid the issue, but seeing as the East Elder was also coming, it seemed like there really was an important issue at hand.

Xu Chuan wavered momentarily before he said, “Elder Yan is at Overlooking Abyss City; he gave the order that as soon as we saw you, we should bring you back to meet him. Junior-apprentice-niece Lin’s body is also within the city.”

Yan Zhaoge’s mouth twitched, “As people get older, they tend to become forgetful. It looks like he’s forgotten that right now, I don’t have to follow his orders.”

“If he has some business with me, he can accompany me on my way to the Eastern Tang capital.”

HSSB 58: No Trivial Matter

Hearing that Lin Yushao might have died under the Tushita Palm, Yan Zhaoge actually felt like he saw the sun breaking through the clouds.

Sure, Yan Xu knew that Yan Zhao cultivated in the Tushita Palm. However, Yan Zhaoge likewise knew that Yan Xu, as the Principal Elder of the Eastern Tang, also trained in this martial art.

It was just that Yan Zhaoge felt that the old man shouldn't have reached the point of being crazy enough to kill Lin Yushao himself simply for the sake of framing him.

Still, even if Yan Xu was not the killer, the framing of Yan Zhaoge and the subsequent spread of rumours had the Elder's fingerprints all over them.

Lin Yushao's body had been discovered by Yan Xu's men and was now in their custody as well. If they wanted to tamper with it, it would be simplicity itself.

But if it hadn't been Yan Xu's bunch who killed Lin Yushao, who then was responsible for it?

Instantly, the shadow of a figure flickered through Yan Zhaoge's mind.

"It shouldn't be to that extent, right?..." Yan Zhaoge's eyes

narrowed into slits, his gaze turning cold.

“I’d said that I was going to gift you with a beating before handing you over to the clan, but if you really are this crazy, then I’ll just make things easier for myself and send you straight into the cycle of reincarnation.”

Very soon, Ah Hu returned.

Seeing him, Yan Zhaoge immediately asked, “Have you found that brat Ye Jing?”

Ah Hu wrung his big hands a bit dejectedly. “Young Master, I tried my best. I followed every single one of the underground rivers in the surrounding area for over five hundred kilometres.”

“That fellow didn’t leave the underground rivers at all, just letting himself be swept along by them. By the time I had found any traces of him, too much time had already passed.”

“He must’ve left the Luliao Mountains already. With him anywhere between the vast heavens and the broad earth, it would be hard for even me to find him.”

Yan Zhaoge did not blame Ah Hu, and just waved his hand dismissively. “It’s alright that you didn’t manage to find him. After all, the underground rivers extend in all directions from where that icy pool collapsed. I can’t blame you for that.”

“However, don’t stop. Continue the search.”

Once he heard the news about Lin Yushao and the rumours that were being circulated, Ah Hu made a noise through his mouth.

Having at least met Lin Yushao, learning about her death felt unpleasant for him. “Who was the one who acted against Miss Lin so venomously?”

The two walked back towards the vicinity of the crowd.

Ah Hu looked towards Feng Yunsheng with a curious expression on his face.

Feng Yunsheng gave him a graceful wave. Ah Hu was stunned for a moment, and then waved back.

Ah Hu looked over at Yan Zhaoge with a simple laugh. “So, about Young Master and Miss Sikong walking rather close to each other... Young Master, you haven’t had any thoughts in that direction, right?”

“Before entering the Luliao Mountains, I’d never seen you expressing any intentions towards Miss Sikong.”

“Still, since we’re on the topic, Miss Sikong is indeed rather beautiful. Have you ever thought about eating her up, Young Master?”

Yan Zhaoge gave him an impatient look.

“Also, Young Master, where did you abduct such a beautiful young lady from this time around?” Ah Hu snuck around to stand before Yan Zhaoge and stared at Feng Yunsheng through the corner of his eye.

“Have you eaten this one yet?” He asked in a lowered voice.

Yan Zhaoge rolled his eyes as he gave the back of Ah Hu’s head a good rap.

Hugging Little Meaty, the little black pet dog that she kept, Feng Yunsheng turned to look over at them with mock earnestness all over her face.

“I haven’t been eaten up by him yet—I’m still a proper, chaste young lady.”

“Cough, cough.” Ah Hu, who had yet to recover from just having been beaten by Yan Zhaoge, choked on his own saliva and immediately started hacking up a lung.

The corners of Yan Zhaoge’s mouth twitched twice, “A proper, chaste lady discusses this kind of thing with men while remaining so calm and relaxed? And so enthusiastically, at that?”

Feng Yunsheng stroked Little Meaty's soft fur, saying with complete indifference, "And what should I do instead? Should I put up with men playing around with me till my face turns red and my heart starts racing, then let them try to move in for the kill? Do I just turn tail and run, or maybe grab my knife and start swinging at them?"

"Or perhaps I should pretend not to hear their words—pretending that the clouds are light and the wind is gentle. How about I just don't register anything I hear at all, allow people to talk about me as they like, and let them spit on my face without wiping it off?"

As Yan Zhaoge looked at her, Feng Yunsheng shook her head, "In these two years since I left the clan, I've gone to many places, seen many people, and experienced many things."

"Sometimes I hid in the wilderness, sometimes in cities. In order to avoid the pursuit of Xiao Shen and the others, I've even stayed deep within the mountains and forests. Even hiding in marketplaces has happened quite often for me."

Yan Zhaoge shook his head as he couldn't resist breaking out into a smile. Looking at Feng Yunsheng, Ah Hu also chortled as he threw her a thumbs-up.

Feng Yunsheng laughed, returning the gesture.

"As for where your Young Master abducted me from—that's a story of a hero saving a damsel in distress."

“Young Master displayed his skill in a domineering fashion, beating up two of the Sacred Sun Clan’s Four Rising Suns, thus saving me, this weak little damsel.”

Ah Hu was stunned for a moment, as he swivelled his head over to look at Yan Zhaoge, “Two? Other than Chao Yuanlong...”

“There was also Xiao Shen,” Yan Zhaoge said like it was nothing at all. “For more specific details, you can just ask the others.”

After having finished listening to the story of Yan Zhaoge’s clashes with Chao Yuanlong and Xiao Shen as well as Yan Zhaoge’s breakthrough into the mid outer aura Martial Scholar realm, Ah Hu looked towards Yan Zhaoge with an expression of worship on his face.

“Young Master, you are really too awesome!”

“Stop it with that boot-licking. Even if you want to lick, at least make your expression a little more sincere first—it’s way too fake right now.”

As they conversed, they walked towards the Eastern Tang capital.

However, halfway there, someone suddenly called out to them from behind. It was the Eastern Tang’s Principal Elder Yan Xu.

He was actually not there to collect old debts after Yan Zhaoge had lost him face. Rather, he had also received a message from the

East Elder to meet up in the Eastern Tang capital.

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, Yan Xu asked, “The East Elder coming to the Eastern Tang—what is it for?”

Yan Zhaoge said mildly, “Why are you asking me, Elder Yan? I myself am also hurrying to the Eastern Tang capital to go meet with the East Elder.”

Yan Xu’s gaze turned cold and gloomy as he looked Yan Zhaoge up and down. “The Sacred Sun Clan seems rather restless and uneasy these days. I’m afraid the East Elder’s visit has something to do with this matter.”

“There is news that even the main headquarters of the Sacred Sun Clan seems to have been alerted.”

“What have you done exactly, this time?”

Seemingly not affected by Yan Xu’s cold and gloomy gaze at all, Yan Zhaoge replied, “The East Elder must have given you instructions regarding this matter, and I’m sure he did so after heavy considerations of his own. I’m it wouldn’t be very polite of me to just casually put in a few words on top of that.”

The meaning of his words was clear: Whatever you need to know, you’ve naturally been told by the East Elder already. The things you don’t need to know, don’t try to find out about them from me—I have no need to tell you.

Yan Xu looked at Yan Zhaoge expressionlessly, slowly nodding his head, "Very well."

Earlier, the East Elder had only warned him to be on his guard against the people of the Sacred Sun Clan and to ensure the safety of Yan Zhaoge's group. Everything else could wait until he had arrived together with Yan Zhaoge in the Eastern Tang Kingdom.

He had specifically emphasized the safety of Yan Zhaoge's party.

Following this train of thought, Yan Xu's gaze now fell on Feng Yunsheng.

The only change in Yan Zhaoge's companions between entering and leaving the Luliao Mountains was her addition.

"When this matter with the East Elder has been settled, there is also another subject that you will have to explain and clarify." Yan Xu said, ending the conversation.

Yan Zhaoge's expression didn't change. "Elder Yan's concern is much appreciated."

By the time they set foot into the Eastern Tang Capital of Jingyang City, Broad Creed Mountain's East Elder, the one responsible for overseeing the East Heaven Region for the clan, had already arrived.

The East Elder was currently waiting for their arrival in the mansion where Yan Xu had originally been stationed.

This was a tall, burly silver-haired old man, who, hale and hearty, didn't give off the feeling of senility.

As they all entered the great hall, the East Elder's bright gaze immediately fell on Feng Yunsheng.

After carefully appraising her with a glance, his gaze now fell back on Yan Zhaoge and Yan Xu.

"Zhaoge, carefully explain to me the course of events," the East Elder said. "The main headquarters of our clan is in an uproar over this matter, and they intend to dispatch people here."

Hearing this, Yan Xu's gaze wavered slightly.

Something for which the East Elder was completely unable to call the shots, needing the main headquarters of the clan itself to move?

The trouble that Yan Zhaoge had stirred up this time must truly be no trivial matter indeed.

HSSB 59: The Most Important Thing

The East Elder's cultivation base as well as the formless pressure that it carried was naturally not something Yan Xu could compare with.

Yan Zhaoge greeted the East Elder, then turned to Feng Yunsheng behind him, "Elder, this is the person whom I mentioned to you before—original name Feng Muge, current name Feng Yunsheng."

On hearing the words 'Feng Muge', the East Elder nodded his head slightly. Someone of his calibre naturally knew of many things.

Yan Zhaoge then introduced, "Junior Sister Feng, this is our clan's leading figure in the East Heaven Region, Elder Qin."

Feng Yunsheng greeted him solemnly, her formalities not lacking in any way. "Feng Yunsheng of the younger generation greets exalted Elder."

The sort of manners and presentation that were required in various situations, the fine difference between acting unrestrained and acting rude—Feng Yunsheng clearly understood all this.

With her background and knowledge, she naturally knew that this burly Elder before her was the very First Seat Elder that Broad Creed Mountain had tasked to oversee the entire East Heaven Region.

Within Broad Creed Mountain, the internal order of power followed thus: First Seat Elder, Principal Elder, Acting Elder.

Perhaps his cultivation as well as the power he wielded could not match up to Yan Zhaoge's father, Yan Di. However, in terms of rank and position, this Elder Qin was on the same level. It was just that their jurisdictions in regards to the main clan were different: one internal, one external.

In theory, as long as something happened within the lands of the East Heaven Region, Elder Qin had the right to deal with it.

However, as the matter with Feng Yunsheng this time involved too many things, Elder Qin felt that it was not so good for him to decide on it on his own.

Broad Creed Mountain already planned to send some people over. Elder Qin only made a special trip to the Eastern Tang this time just to get a feel of the matter before they arrived.

However, if the matter would not be passed by this Elder Qin, there would be no further hope of it passing through whatsoever.

Yan Zhaoge looked towards Elder Qin. This old man was one of the long-serving Elders of the clan, of the same generation as the old Clan Chief himself. He had never leaned towards either his father Yan Di's or his second apprentice-uncle's side before.

He could not depend on getting special treatment from this man, but similarly, he also didn't have to worry about him causing trouble like Yan Xu.

All of the things he did were based on the cold, hard truth, with Broad Creed Mountain's best interests at heart.

"Elder Qin, as I reported to you earlier, this Junior Sister Feng was once a disciple of the Sacred Sun Clan. Now, she has abandoned it, and she wishes to join our Broad Creed Mountain," Yan Zhaoge said neither quickly nor slowly.

Elder Qin listened quietly, not saying a word.

Yan Xu did not interrupt—it was impossible that Yan Zhaoge did not know what repercussions Broad Creed Mountain taking in a disciple who had betrayed the Sacred Sun Clan might bring about.

Even so, he had still brought Feng Yunsheng back. Moreover, Elder Qin, rather than opposing the idea immediately, had even alerted the clan about this matter. This implied that the situation was a rather unique one.

Yan Zhaoge said calmly, "Elder should know that while investigating the Sacred Sun Clan's Maiden of Extreme Yin in the past, there was a report in which a name, the name of Feng Muge, was mentioned."

"Eventually, because of Meng Wan suddenly charging into the

world, this piece of news was instead believed to be a hoax. However, it was not actually so.”

“Feng Muge actually exists—she is precisely the Junior Sister Feng behind me.”

Everyone present besides Elder Qin and Yan Xu were also Broad Creed Mountain heavyweights stationed in the East Heaven Region.

Apart from Elder Qin who had already been in the know, the moment Yan Xu and the other heard the four words ‘Maiden of Extreme Yin’, their eyes instantly lit up.

Within the five Regions of the vast Heavenly Domain, they had always been unable to find even a single Maiden of Extreme Yin.

Broad Creed Mountain had even secretly sent people to search in the other Domains, hoping that they would be able to pick up some scraps, but they had all come back empty-handed.

In the Extreme Yin Bouts of the past two years, Broad Creed Mountain had been relegated to sit by the corner and watch both times, watching other Sacred Grounds contest for the Extreme Yin Crown just like that. Naturally, they had been filled with a sense of helplessness and frustration.

If Feng Yunsheng was really a Maiden of Extreme Yin, even if they had to withstand a lot of pressure from the Sacred Sun Clan

head-on, Broad Creed Mountain would still definitely insist on keeping her.

Elder Qin nodded his head before asking calmly, “In your earlier message, you only said that this little friend Feng’s Extreme Yin Physique was damaged, but you didn’t mention the extent of the damage itself.”

“Grooming a Maiden of Extreme Yin requires investing many resources. Still, with the Sacred Sun Clan’s background, raising another Maiden of Extreme Yin simultaneously would still definitely be possible even though they already have Meng Wan.”

“Allowing a Maiden of Extreme Yin to roam about as she likes would be no trivial matter—the Sacred Sun Clan wouldn’t be so negligent and careless.”

“Unless... Is Little Friend Feng’s Extreme Yin Physique already completely crippled?”

Yan Zhaoge’s tone did not rise or fall as he answered honestly, “Presently, that is indeed true.”

Elder Qin’s brows knit slightly as he looked at Yan Zhaoge and Feng Yunsheng.

Yan Xu now spoke up slowly. “Even the Sacred Sun Clan wouldn’t be willing to send over a Maiden of Extreme Yin as a spy.”

“However, if it were instead an ordinary disciple whose Extreme Yin Physique had already been crippled, that might still be a possibility.”

On hearing Yan Xu’s words, everyone there frowned, regardless of faction, as they turned to appraise Yan Zhaoge and Feng Yunsheng with scrutinizing gazes.

Today’s matter was no trivial thing indeed.

If Feng Yunsheng’s Extreme Yin Physique was in perfect condition, there would be no further need for discussion. Broad Creed Mountain would definitely take her in immediately, and Yan Zhaoge would be considered as having performed a merit rather than a demerit—a huge merit, in fact.

However, if Feng Yunsheng had lost her Extreme Yin Physique, whether or not Broad Creed Mountain would still be willing to take her in would then be something that they would have to deliberate on.

Accepting the disciples of other Sacred Grounds who had betrayed their clan was a rather contentious move in and of itself. It was especially true when the two sides, such as Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan, had a rather disharmonious relationship. Doing this sort of thing would actually be extremely likely to cause their already hostile relationship to worsen a step further.

The one who had caused all of this, Yan Zhaoge, would then be labelled a frivolous and impetuous person, having brought in unnecessary trouble and causing problems for the clan.

Furthermore, if Broad Creed Mountain took Feng Yunsheng in and she was eventually revealed to be a spy sent over from the Sacred Sun Clan as she caused problems for Broad Creed Mountain, as the main culprit, Yan Zhaoge would then earn a huge demerit.

Yan Zhaoge's expression didn't change. "Feng Yunsheng suffered the bullying of her fellow Sacred Sun Clan disciples, and the Elders in the clan were unable to uphold justice for her, with some even trying to turn white to black and claim her life."

"The only one who cared for her, her Master, fell to the Flame Devils not long ago during the conflict in the East Sea. When she learned of this, she had already been fleeing for two whole years. At that time, she finally decided to truly betray the Sacred Sun Clan, even killing three of her fellow disciples in the process."

Yan Zhaoge looked at them. "Two years ago, the very reason that she escaped from the main headquarters of the Sacred Sun Clan was that she had heavily injured Xiao Shen. After that incident, she also faced the constant pursuit of Xiao Shen and his men."

"Who's not to say that the Sacred Sun Clan were willing to sacrifice the life of three of their young disciples in order to successfully plant her as a spy?" Yan Xu said emotionlessly.

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “There is the possibility, but do you think that the Grand Elder of the Sacred Sun Clan would be willing to have that sole grandson of his, the one meant to help him carry on his family line, become a eunuch forever just to achieve that?”

The huge hall instantly fell silent.

Yan Xu was a bit taken aback. Elder Qin frowned, asking, “Are you saying that...?”

“That year, Xiao Shen had his lower body harmed by Junior Sister Feng... En, in a sense, he is also a cripple now,” Yan Zhaoge said with a serious look on his face.

Feng Yunsheng similarly had on a serious look, and she bowed. “Being desperate at the time, this junior accidentally made a wrong move. Although Xiao Shen deserved it, this is a subject naturally unpleasant to the ear. Please excuse this junior.”

Yan Zhaoge spoke up again. “I can vouch for what she says—the second time I clashed with Xiao Shen, I confirmed this point myself.”

“Of course, it could also be that Xiao Shen was castrated because of something else... actually, ‘castrated’ is not completely accurate—he simply lost his ability to perform a function. In any case, perhaps his condition was caused something else, and the Sacred Sun Clan made use of the circumstances to blow things out of proportion.”

Thus, if Junior Sister Feng does enter our clan in the future, some investigation would still be needed. Still, on the whole, I feel that Junior Sister Feng's words are trustworthy."

Yan Xu's mouth twitched, and he snorted, no longer contesting the earlier point. Instead he said, "Say that again when her Extreme Yin Physique is no longer crippled, why don't you."

Elder Qin, however, fell into a deep silence as he pondered. The most important thing for Broad Creed Mountain at this time was to make a decision.

HSSB 60: You Won't Find The People You Want, Only A Pair Of Fists!

Elder Qin sat there, unmoving. His eyes shifted from Yan Zhaoge to fall on Feng Yunsheng.

The Elder's gaze was so focused that it almost took tangible form. As it landed on Feng Yunsheng's wrist, it was as though he were checking her pulse with his gaze alone.

Feng Yunsheng just remained quietly where she was. A short while later, Elder Qin retracted his gaze.

“Her pulse shows that she indeed had the Extreme Yin Physique once. However, her physique was compromised by an excess of yin, which led to it drying up and completely dissipating. Her yin is currently only slightly stronger than an ordinary person's.”

Elder Qin looked towards Yan Zhaoge, slowly shaking his head. “The people of the Sacred Sun Clan probably checked this several times before making the final judgment.”

Yan Xu and the others all nodded in agreement. This would only be natural—it was well within their expectations.

Elder Qin paused for a bit, a trace of pity in his gaze as he looked at Feng Yunsheng. “Her bones, however, are outstandingly suited for cultivation. I wonder how her power of comprehension and strength of mind compare.”

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “If not for her having gotten into the accident that year, the Sacred Sun Clan’s prime representative in the Extreme Yin Bout would actually have been her instead.”

“Perhaps this was because she entered the clan earlier, but at the very least we know that she was definitely not inferior to Meng Wan.”

Meng Wan was not just a Maiden of Extreme Yin. Her cultivation talent also stood out noticeably among the members of the younger generation. Among those of the same age, she was an absolute elite, her fame shaking the world.

The momentum of her rise was such that there was even a vague feeling of her starting to preside over the Four Rising Suns.

“If Junior Sister Feng had only injured some other part of Xiao Shen and not castrated him, perhaps she wouldn’t have been forced to flee,” Yan Zhaoge added.

Elder Qin nodded, before falling back into thoughtful silence.

If Feng Yunsheng’s cultivation talent was ordinary, taking her in simply to spite the Sacred Sun Clan was something that Broad Creed Mountain really had no need to do.

While the two factions had a disharmonious relationship, it had still not yet reached the point of refusing to compromise with each

other even over such a small matter.

If it was the Water Domain's Jade Sea City whose relationship with the Sacred Sun Clan was like that of fire and water, though, such a situation could actually occur.

From a certain perspective, that was the best place for Feng Yunsheng to seek asylum.

It was only that the Water Domain was situated too far away from the Heaven and Fire Domains; if Feng Yunsheng wanted to escape there alone under such heavy pursuit, it would be very difficult indeed.

Therefore, Broad Creed Mountain had become the best choice for her.

Earlier, if Yan Zhaoge had refused to take her in but also had not hand her over to Xiao Shen, Feng Yunsheng had been prepared to risk travelling to the Water Domain.

Now, Elder Qin had discovered through his examination that Feng Yunsheng was still a genius amongst geniuses even without the Extreme Yin Physique—a monstrous talent that was worth raising.

This caused Elder Qin and Broad Creed Mountain to be a little conflicted.

They had to carefully consider, weighing what they stood to gain against what they might lose as a result of their choice.

Yan Zhaoge laughed lightly. “Actually, Junior Sister Feng’s Extreme Yin Physique... it can be recovered.”

Elder Qin knit his brows but did not say anything more, simply looking towards Feng Yunsheng once again.

This time, he lifted his arm and tapped in the air with his finger. A strand of light flew out from his fingertip, landing on Feng Yunsheng’s wrist.

After carefully checking Feng Yunsheng’s condition once again, Elder Qin looked at Yan Zhaoge, asking in a deep tone, “On what basis do you make this claim?”

Yan Xu also glanced at Feng Yunsheng, and he too had something tangible in his gaze as it landed on Feng Yunsheng’s wrist.

After a moment, Yan Xu retracted his gaze as he said in an indifferent voice, “You imply that the damage is light, but her physique can’t even be considered simply damaged anymore. Rather, it has already completely withered away.”

“To help her to recover—the difficulty would be no easier than trying to resurrect a dead person.”

“Moreover, it’s not a person who’s just drawn his final breath but

a person who's already been dead for two years.”

Yan Xu looked at Yan Zhaoge, “In recent days, you have indeed far exceeded everyone's expectations by consecutively performing a number of major deeds, but I'd like to know—do you have the power to bring the dead back to life?”

Elder Qin remained silent, but he obviously agreed with what Yan Xu had said.

He looked calmly at Yan Zhaoge, waiting for him to give him an explanation.

Yan Zhaoge said with a slight smile on his face, “Elder Qin, you said just now that the power of yin within Junior Sister Feng's body was only a bit stronger than that of ordinary people?”

Elder Qin nodded his head, “That's right.”

Yan Zhaoge said leisurely, “When I first met her, she was actually no different from the common person. Her Extreme Yin Physique had already completely dried up, with only some remnant traces and not even a single bit of Extreme Yin qi left at all.”

“What?!” Elder Qin's eyes abruptly widened.

He looked towards Feng Yunsheng, finding it rather hard to believe Yan Zhaoge's words.

Feng Yunsheng now opened her mouth, saying, “While travelling alongside Senior Brother Yan these past few days, this junior received the acupuncture treatment of his golden needle secret technique. With that, the dried up arteries and veins in my body have indeed begun to fill with Extreme Yin qi once more.”

“While the rate of recovery is extremely slow, my condition is already different from before.”

Yan Xu and the others all stared at Yan Zhaoge and Feng Yunsheng in disbelief.

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “Our clan has never had a Maiden of Extreme Yin, having not been able to find one despite searching everywhere. These past few years, while the other Sacred Grounds competed for the Extreme Yin Crown, we could only watch from the sidelines. I was also extremely worried and troubled by this situation.”

“Thus, I thought: while the Extreme Yin Physique comes inborn, is there the possibility that it could be artificially induced in a person?”

“Thus, I began gathering lots of records and information and did some research in this field.” Yan Zhaoge shook his head a little regretfully. “Sadly, the Extreme Yin Physique is a gift from the Heavens; I made no progress and have no hope whatsoever of inducing it artificially.”

He swivelled his head to look towards Feng Yunsheng, “However, I also managed to accumulate quite some knowledge in this area. In the end, I discovered that, while it is impossible to induce the Extreme Yin Physique after birth, if there was someone who had been born with the Extreme Yin Physique yet had it damaged afterwards, repairing it would indeed be possible.”

“I also have to thank Junior Sister Feng for trusting in me and allowing me to experiment on her. After all, I have never had a way to verify the efficacy of the method I came up with before now.”

Yan Xu was expressionless as he looked coldly at Yan Zhaoge and Feng Yunsheng, “A one-sided claim. How can you prove it?”

Yan Zhaoge said, “From the time I met Junior Sister Feng to now—the time that’s passed has not been long.”

“After a few more days, the Extreme Yin qi within Junior Sister Feng’s body will have strengthened a step further. At that time, my words will be validated.”

Yan Xu said expressionlessly, “The people of the Sacred Sun Clan were repelled by this old man just a few days ago. Now that all of you have returned, they should come knocking again very soon.”

“We must make a decision and fast. We don’t have the time to wait for that verification of yours.”

Yan Zhaoge's raised his brows slightly, intending to speak, but was interrupted by Elder Qin's raised hand.

The burly East Elder looked straight at Yan Zhaoge, "Even assuming that what you claim is true, to what extent can your method help her to recover? Will she regain merely a portion of what she had previously, or can you cause it to be as it was before, or at least bring her close to her peak state?"

His expression a little solemn, Yan Zhaoge said slowly, "Recovery would require some time. Also, there are some required resources and environmental conditions that I am still lacking and will have to be procured."

"As for what extent she can recover to?" Yan Zhaoge gazed back at Elder Qin candidly.

"To an even stronger condition than before!"

He suddenly laughed. "If I fail to do so, I will enter the Heaven Sealing Gorge."

Elder Qin looked at Yan Zhaoge, his gaze deep and silent.

Yan Xu wrinkled his brows, wanting to say something, but was interrupted by someone from outside coming in to report that the Sacred Sun Clan had mobilised right to their doorstep.

"Elder Qin?" Yan Xu looked at him.

The burly Elder stared impatiently. “Directly send them packing! They won’t find the people they want here, only a pair of fists!”

HSSB 61: The Sacred Sun Clan Comes Knocking

Hearing Elder Qin's instructions, Yan Xu fell silent for a moment before he nodded, got up and headed outside.

Feng Yunsheng bowed to Elder Qin. "Thank you, Elder."

Elder Qin waved his hands. "Little girl, this matter regarding you is too important—this old man cannot simply make a decision about it on my own. You will have to wait for the final decision to come from the main headquarters of our clan itself."

"Yes, this junior understands."

Feng Yunsheng now swivelled her head to look at Yan Zhaoge, saying in a low voice, "Thank you."

The Heaven Sealing Gorge was something that even she, as a past disciple of the Sacred Sun Clan, had heard of.

The Heaven Sealing Gorge was where Broad Creed Mountain held those who had committed serious crimes. Only those who were utterly evil yet could not be sentenced to death at the time or Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners who had committed extremely grave mistakes would be imprisoned there.

According to rumours, it was a place where the light of day could

not be seen—a place with an environment that was even more atrocious than that in the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

Since Broad Creed Mountain was founded, there had yet to be anybody who had been able to escape on their own after having been imprisoned there.

Yan Zhaoge looked at her nonchalantly. “I just have confidence in myself.”

Feng Yunsheng answered impatiently, “Yes, I lacked confidence in you—that was my fault. Next time, I will definitely make sure to have faith.”

“Next time, I’ll say ‘Nice one, I knew I could rely on you!’”

Yan Zhaoge let out a ‘ha’ sound as he said, “Low-key, low-key.”

At this moment, outside the mansion, a ring of golden light that looked like the sun was suspended in mid-air above the street, causing the surrounding area to become extremely hot and unbearable as the passers-by hurriedly withdrew.

Those more knowledgeable knew that this was the Sacred Sun Clan’s Principal Elder in the Eastern Tang Kingdom.

And now he had on the look of soldiers before the walls of an enemy city—his target being the headquarters of Broad Creed Mountain’s Principal Elder in the Eastern Tang Kingdom.

Obviously a conflict had occurred between the two Sacred Grounds yet again.

In the Eastern Tang, this kind of thing was not all that rarely seen. Still, much of the conflict between the two clans took place in the dark.

Now however, one's side Principal Elder was overbearingly knocking on the other's doorstep.

“The conflict between the two sides has gone up by another level, but I feel like it shouldn't be to the extent of directly breaking out into a fight here in Jingyang City, right? A clash between two Martial Grandmasters—just the resulting shockwaves would be enough to level the surrounding area into a flat land!”

Many people were extremely worried.

From that golden sun hanging in the sky, a violent voice resounded, “Yan Xu, I know that that brat surnamed Yan is back!”

“He harboured a disciple of my Sacred Sun Clan who betrayed and escaped from the clan, even injuring the disciples that my Sacred Sun Clan dispatched to capture her back!”

“If your Broad Creed Mountain cannot teach its disciples, then let me teach them for you!”

“Hand over Yan Zhaoge and that lowly maid immediately!

Otherwise I'll tear down this place of yours!"

Yan Xu's calm voice now resounded from within the mansion, "The whereabouts of my clan's disciples is not something that this old man is accountable to you for. If your Sacred Sun Clan lost your disciple, go and find her yourself! What does it have to do with my Broad Creed Mountain?"

"There's no one that you want here. Stop making random excuses. If you want to find trouble, this old man will accompany you for a bit."

From within the golden sun, a human figure gradually materialised. It was an elderly man who was wearing a golden robe, with a look of wealth about him.

He stared at the mansion below him, laughing fiercely. "Injuring disciples of my Sacred Sun Clan and harbouring fugitives of my Sacred Sun Clan—your Broad Creed Mountain has really grown brave indeed."

"Looks like you have forgotten that if it hadn't been for my Sacred Sun Clan being merciful in the past, your Broad Creed Mountain would long since have been extinct!"

Hearing this, the Yan Zhaoge within the great hall scoffed, "Not afraid of twisting your tongue even under such a strong wind."

When the Flame Devils had first invaded and then been repelled,

the exalted Hantian Zhan Dongge had fallen, with Broad Creed Mountain having suffered the greatest losses amongst the various Sacred Grounds. With that, the Sacred Sun Clan as well as the other Sacred Grounds had been granted a chance to catch up to Broad Creed Mountain.

Some respected the contribution that had been made by Zhan Dongge and Broad Creed Mountain, but there were also those who had ill intentions, wanting to make use of the chance to topple the clan while it was down.

Luckily, the Broad Creed Mountain of that time possessed many competent people. One of them, who had willingly served by Zhan Dongge's side, though his radiance was outshone into obscurity by the former, now stepped out.

This person was the Heaven Diviner Zhan Xilou. He was the Exalted Hantian Zhan Dongge's brother, and also the one who succeeded him as the next Clan Chief.

After Zhan Dongge fell, Zhan Xilou, who succeeded him, took charge of the clan splendidly with his own power and revealed a shocking brilliance.

And it was because the previously unknown Zhan Xilou had suddenly sprung up out of nowhere that, even though Broad Creed Mountain's strength had been greatly damaged following the first invasion of the Flame Devils, it could still stand firm against all adversities and managed to make it through its darkest hour intact.

Zhan Dongge and Zhan Xilou also came to be known as the most legendary pair of brothers in the Eight Extremities World after the time of the Great Calamity.

The founder of the Sacred Sun Clan, who had been respectfully christened as the Sacred Sun Saint by the masses and had successfully led his clan to prominence following that battle with the Flame Devils, clashed with Zhan Xilou and Broad Creed Mountain often.

Under Zhan Xilou, Broad Creed Mountain adopted a conservative position, hiding its strength and keeping a low profile. It quietly built up its power once more while also moving and retreating as needed, never allowing the Sacred Sun Clan to truly gain too much of an advantage from it.

Afterwards, the Sacred Sun Saint resigned and passed down his position of Clan Chief, following which no news of him was ever heard again.

Zhan Xilou, on the other hand, fell in yet another great war with the Flame Devils, spilling the last drops of his blood for the Eight Extremities World just like his brother before him.

However, with Zhan Xilou's hard work, Broad Creed Mountain had gradually been able to gain a stable foothold once again, from its original state where it'd seemed like even the wind and the rain could have caused it to quiver and shake.

It was only that during this same period of time, the Sacred Sun Clan, following much expansion and development, finally managed to surpass Broad Creed Mountain, thus usurping its position as the strongest of the Sacred Grounds.

Yan Zhaoge shrugged his shoulders. “If his family’s Sacred Sun Saint is still around, please ask him to show himself. With the attacks of the Flame Devils getting fiercer and fiercer in the present day, he would be just the sort of expert the Eight Extremities World needs.”

Yan Xu’s figure now appeared above in the air above the mansion, as his gaze met that of the Sacred Sun Clan’s golden-robed Elder straight on, “Destroy my Broad Creed Mountain? If you think you can do it, then feel free to try.”

The golden-robed Elder laughed coldly, “If I didn’t lack the permission to, I would have taken care of you long ago. Today, I will start by destroying you!”

His aura-qi surged, as he was once again enveloped by golden light.

It was unlike the illusory sunlight that the likes of Xiao Shen and Chao Yuanlong could produce. Instead, he had truly transformed into a sun, brilliantly illuminating the surrounding lands.

The moisture in the surrounding air completely evaporated. Small cracks began snaking through the ground along the street, and the grass and the trees all became charred and withered.

Under the high temperature, the surrounding air distorted.

Yan Xu was expressionless as, a serious look in his eyes, both his hands pushed outwards simultaneously.

The cultivation of a Martial Grandmaster was shown in its full entirety as the Tushita palm that Yan Xu was currently using was dissimilar to the same martial art when utilised by a Martial Scholar like Yan Zhaoge.

Purple flames instantly appeared, transforming into an actual sea of flames which clashed with the huge golden sun.

The purple Tushita flames and the golden sunlight met in mid-air, as the surrounding temperature instantly rose yet again.

Some dry, flammable objects from the surrounding environment immediately ignited as the heavens and the earth within the surrounding hundred li all but transformed into a world of flames.

As the Eastern Tang capital Jingyang City shuddered, line after line of spirit patterns began appearing on the ground.

The air became slightly cooler, as Yan Xu and the golden-robed Elder both felt themselves being suppressed by a formless pressure.

The two did not cease fighting, as they allowed Jingyang City's

grand formation to suppress the area that their clash would affect as it was made to do.

Within the air, the purple Tushita flames and the golden sunlight clashed and roiled unceasingly, causing the very heavens to roil and the earth to overturn.

The great sun that the golden-robed Elder had transformed into resembled the true overhanging sun itself.

The sun suddenly began gradually getting smaller, the figure of the golden-robed Elder reappearing. The sun now materialised at his palm, incomparably refined and dazzling as compared to before.

The golden-robed Elder lifted his hand, as it seemed like he was lifting up the very sun itself. Then, he struck out with his palm!

With an inward motion of Yan Xu's palms, the purple Tushita flames in the surrounding air also began agglomerating.

The leaping flames were suppressed and refined to the point of possessing true form and substance, as they actually took the form of a massive purple pill furnace.

The purple flames within the pill furnace leapt about unceasingly as with the heavens and the earth as the pill furnace and the universe as the driving force, a domineering power headed straight for the sun in the golden-robed Elder's palm!

HSSB 62: Repelling Them Head-On

As the two Martial Grandmaster experts clashed, the natural phenomena in the sky and the ambient temperature changed for a distance of a hundred li in all directions.

Luckily, Jingyang City's grand formation kept the resulting tempest contained within a limited, restricted area.

Within that area, however, it was already like the world had been turned upside down.

“Broad Creed Mountain is intent on opposing my Sacred Sun Clan?”

Now, an imposing voice resounded in the air above Jingyang City.

The next instant, a massive golden sun that was even larger than that of the golden-robed Elder appeared within the air.

As this massive sun appeared, the sun which the golden-robed man had transformed into instantly dimmed.

And as for the purple flames of Yan Xu's Tushita palm, in that same instant, they dimmed even more so and were almost extinguished!

Yan Xu let out a muffled groan as the pill furnace formed of the purple Tushita flames immediately filled with cracks before it finally collapsed and broke apart.

Despite leaping around in mid-air for a bit, even the flames that were left over from the collapsed pill furnace seemed like they were going to die at any moment.

That second sun hung high in the sky, actually contending with the real sun itself in terms of radiance. It actually seemed at that moment that there were two suns present in the sky, illuminating the Eastern Tang capital of Jingyang City together.

At this moment, Jingyang City's grand formation no longer appeared as undisturbed as it had been against Yan Xu and the golden-robed Elder.

In the air, line after line of spirit patterns lit up, distorting over and over again.

Within the mansion, the eyebrows of the seated Elder Qin lifted slowly. "If you want to show off your power, you've come to the wrong place."

From within the mansion, a majestic sword-qi suddenly shot out and surged into the skies.

Where the sword-qi passed, the unbearable heat brought about by the two suns decreased instantly, as the entire land turned cool.

After the coolness, though, actually came a gloomy coldness!

Elder Qin's form now also appeared above the mansion as he stared enraged at that massive golden sun.

With his low shout, the winds gusted and the clouds surged as though a gigantic, formless blade had appeared, piercing open a fissure in the very air itself.

The fissure spread in the direction of the second sun, desiring to split it apart along with everything else!

“Eight Extreme Arts—Chaotic Elements Uniting Blade?” An imposing voice resounded from the massive golden sun.

The next instant, instead of retreating, the massive golden sun actually advanced, smashing straight down toward Elder Qin!

It was as though the sun had tilted westward—an incomparably bright radiance illuminated the ground below, looking like it was going to incinerate the entire mortal realm!

It was precisely the Sacred Sun Clan's West-tilting Heaven Incinerating Blade!

On the golden sword-light that portrayed the setting sun tilting towards the west, a huge divine talisman suddenly lit up. Vast and

intricate, it appeared as if it was going to engulf the entire Jingyang City.

Elder Qin activated the Chaotic Elements Uniting Blade—the formless blade that slashed the heavens and split the earth wherever it passed also lit up with a huge divine talisman.

The power of the two sides having increased by yet another level, when they clashed, it was as though Jingyang City was about to be shattered.

Now, the voice of the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom resounded within Jingyang City, “If the two of you want to fight, please go somewhere else; do you want to tear down my Eastern Tang Capital?”

Jingyang City’s grand formation abruptly brightened, as the intertwining spirit patterns grew clearer and more densely packed.

The grand formation began operating at its maximum power, its power rising steadily.

Elder Qin stopped his sword-qi, as he snorted, “If someone wants to create trouble out of nothing, this old man will accompany him to the very end; does he think that my Broad Creed Mountain is so good to bully?”

From that massive golden sun suspended in the sky, a voice resounded, “Zhao Shicheng, you want to interfere in the matter

between Broad Creed Mountain and my Sacred Sun Clan?”

The calm voice of Zhao Shicheng, the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, now resounded from Jingyang City’s grand formation itself, “The East Rising Lord speaks too heavily. My Eastern Tang is naturally unable to interfere in a matter between two Sacred Grounds.”

“However, with the two of you fighting it out in my Jingyang City, this King is unable to sit back and do nothing.”

From within the mansion, Yan Zhaoge stoked his lower jaw, “Ah, so it’s the East Rising Lord, one of the Seven Reigning Suns. However, according to my memories, the East Rising Lord should have changed just a few years ago.”

After the Sacred Sun Clan had risen to prominence, it had possessed seven outstanding experts, who had been known by the world as the Seven Reigning Suns.

Their titles corresponded with the Seven Great Sun Arts: Dawn, East Rising, Heaven Striking, World Illuminating, West Tilting, Sunset as well as Twilight.

Afterwards, the Seven Reigning Suns became a fixed title. After any one of these experts fell or retreated into seclusion, there would be a replacement who would inherit the title.

Swivelling his head, Yan Zhaoge saw that Feng Yunsheng had a

rather strange expression on her face.

Seeing Yan Zhaoge looking at her, Feng Yunsheng just shook her head. “My Grand Master was the previous East Rising Lord before him. After Grand Master fell, the title was naturally passed down, and the one who inherited it was that guy out there.”

“He is the youngest among the Seven Reigning Suns and also has had the least experience. However, his cultivation and skill in martial arts are fairly astounding.”

The massive sun within the sky gradually vanished, as a middle-aged, golden-robed man now materialised. He was precisely the current East Rising Lord.

The East Rising Lord stared at Elder Qin before his gaze swept down across the Jingyang City beneath him, as he slowly said, “Someone has been harbouring a disciple who betrayed my Sacred Sun Clan; naturally, I’d have to get myself involved.”

“Hand the person over and apologize to redeem your sins.”

“Otherwise, we fight.”

Elder Qin’s burly frame stood steadfast and tall in mid-air, his expression not changing whatsoever, “This old man has already said that we do not have the one you seek here.”

“If you want to fight, then we’ll fight. This old man has nothing

else, but he has a sword and a pair of fists to accompany you as you'd like."

The golden-robed Elder beside the East Rising Lord said angrily, "My Sacred Sun Clan disciples saw with their own eyes how your Broad Creed Mountain's Yan Zhaoge took away that rebel disciple. How is this something that you can completely absolve yourself of with just a few words?"

Standing beside Elder Qin, Yan Xu's face was expressionless. "It is true because you say it is?"

"This old man still says that your Sacred Sun Clan stole my Broad Creed Mountain's treasures. Return them swiftly."

A golden light flickered within the East Rising Lord's eyes, piercing till Yan Xu's entire body hurt. "What words! You're courting death!"

Elder Qin strode forward, "If you want to show off your power, please return to your Sacred Sun Clan's World Illuminating Peak to do so."

Suddenly, Yan Zhaoge's voice resounded from within the mansion.

"Before the East Rising Lord, Broad Creed Mountain's Yan Zhaoge pays his greetings."

“In the Luliao Mountains, I indeed clashed with your Sacred Sun Clan’s Xiao Shen and Chao Yuanlong, and I also encountered the Feng Muge that your Sacred Sun Clan is currently looking for.”

“However, after that, I no longer had any interactions with that Feng Muge,” Yan Zhaoge said mildly. “It’s just that, after talking with her a bit before this, I actually came to know about some interesting things.”

“For example, a certain Sacred Ground whose fame resounds throughout the entire Eight Extremities World actually shelters evil people and accepts wrongdoing, allowing the grandson of a certain Grand Elder to try to forcibly taint a fellow female disciple without doing anything about it.”

“Him having failed in his attempt, they actually shielded the culprit and oppressed that female disciple instead.”

“The most interesting part was that, a certain person whose lust consumed his life actually received Heaven’s retribution in having his descendants’ root broken...”

Yan Zhaoge said leisurely, “Well, at least there is no fear of such a thing ever happening again in the future.”

“A load of utter nonsense!” The East Rising Lord spoke coldly, “Just from you smearing my Sacred Sun Clan’s good name alone, I could kill you right here on the spot, and no one would be able to say anything about it!”

“If your father Yan Di is unhappy about it, ask him to come to the World Illuminating Peak. I wonder if he’ll live to reach the summit alive?”

Saying thus, he clapped down with his palm.

Elder Qin laughed heroically, “Not being fair in dealing with matters, not knowing how to educate your own disciples. Rather than caring about that fugitive of yours, you should spend the effort on examining yourself more closely instead!”

“This is still not a place where you can run amok and do whatever you like!”

As the two sides began clashing once more, the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom remained silent throughout, just suppressing the combatants simultaneously with Jingyang City’s grand formation.

Without doubt, he was naturally skewing towards Yan Zhaoge’s side.

Although he could not afford to offend the Sacred Sun Clan, and, as much as possible, tried to remain neutral whenever the two Sacred Grounds clashed, this matter involved his old friend Yan Di’s only son. Zhao Shicheng chose his side without any hesitation whatsoever, running the massive risk of offending the Sacred Sun Clan as he threw all thoughts of sitting on the fence to the back of his mind.

The East Rising Lord's gaze was cold. If things were as usual, Jingyang City's grand formation would be unable to do much to him at all.

However, with him being in an intense fight with Elder Qin at the same time and having to deal with two threats at once, the power of Jingyang City's grand formation gradually shone through.

With Elder Qin fighting him as if he had the home advantage, the East Rising Lord, who had originally been evenly matched with him, was slowly being put at a disadvantage as time passed.

"Good... Very good!" The East Rising Lord retreated from the battlefield, turning his head to glance one final time at Jingyang City before he transformed into a massive sun once more, disappearing beyond the distant horizon without saying anything else.

HSSB 63: No Longer In The Early Outer Aura Stage

Having forced the East Rising Lord into retreat, Elder Qin nodded in thanks towards the Eastern Tang royal palace far away. “Many thanks, King Zhao, my Broad Creed Mountain will remember this favour.”

“If the Sacred Sun Clan comes back to find trouble with the Eastern Tang later, my Broad Creed Mountain will bear the burden for you.”

The voice of Zhao Shicheng, the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, resounded from far away. “Elder Qin is too polite—Broad Creed Mountain is the true owner of the Heaven Domain.”

Although Zhao Shicheng was not there to see it, Yan Zhaoge got up and bowed in his direction from within the mansion. “I have caused trouble for Uncle.”

Elder Qin and Yan Xu returned within the mansion, getting seated once more.

“It was only the East Rising Lord who came here. This shows that the Sacred Sun Clan has not yet reached the point of thinking about this as an extremely urgent matter that they must deal with.”

Yan Xu said slowly, “What they are concerned about now is the

matter of one of their disciples betraying them and fleeing, and then our Broad Creed Mountain taking that disciple in.”

“They don’t realize that they’re losing a Maiden of Extreme Yin, and moreover, it’s even to Broad Creed Mountain.”

As he said this, Yan Xu’s gaze line of vision was directed at Yan Zhaoge and Feng Yunsheng.

Yan Zhaoge nodded his head. Yan Xu’s analysis was indeed not wrong, happening to coincide perfectly with his own.

Feng Yunsheng had already gone through the various diagnostics and examinations of many peak Sacred Sun Clan experts, with all of them arriving at the conclusion that her Extreme Yin Physique was completely crippled for good.

Otherwise, the incident of two years ago would not have happened. Furthermore, Yan Zhaoge and Broad Creed Mountain would also not have been able to pick up a Maiden of Extreme Yin who had slipped through their net like they were doing now.

Elder Qin said, “This is a good thing for our clan.”

This way, the Sacred Sun Clan’s retaliatory actions would not be excessively intense.

While they didn’t fear the Sacred Sun Clan, Broad Creed Mountain would also not want to start a war between the two sides

when it wasn't necessary. A confrontation between two Sacred Grounds would inevitably result in a scene that no one would be able to control.

While the Sacred Sun Clan held the position of strength, Broad Creed Mountain would naturally be happy to continue working on bolstering its own strength in peace before it truly obtained the power to contend with the Sacred Sun Clan head-on.

Therefore, when Yan Xu had gone out, while his attitude had been rather tough and he had not held back with his attacks, he had also stubbornly not admitted that their side had taken in Feng Yunsheng, thus leaving some face for the Sacred Sun Clan and leaving it a pedestal to step down from.

Even Elder Qin, who had adopted an even more tough and unyielding stance, also silently agreed with this.

With them having reached a consensus on this, Yan Zhaoge naturally hadn't spoiled things for his clan's Elders.

The Sacred Sun Clan disciple Feng Muge, naturally wouldn't have any more interactions with himself and Broad Creed Mountain.

However, the vagrant Maiden of Extreme Yin Feng Yunsheng... now that was a different matter altogether.

You say they look exactly the same?

Under the vastness of the heavens and the earth, many wonders abound; it would also not be the first time that there are people who so strikingly resemble each other.

So beautiful, and yet also looking exactly the same?

That's also not impossible, isn't it? Maybe they are even twin sisters who were separated at birth...

At the end of the day, if you want people there's none; if you want a fight there's some.

I'll give you a pedestal; if you get down from it, everyone will be safe just like that. If you don't, well, we'll just do it the hard way then.

Yan Xu said, "In the last Extreme Yin Bout, Meng Wan failed and lost the Extreme Yin Crown, which fell into the hands of Jade Sea City, which is on bad terms with the Sacred Sun Clan while on rather good terms with us."

"Their Clan Chief went into secluded meditation and has not emerged for a long time. If it's not an extremely major issue, the Sacred Sun Clan also won't want to fight all-out with our clan at present."

Elder Qin looked towards Feng Yunsheng, "The crux of this matter lies with this Little Friend Feng."

“All things considered, you should not continue staying in the Eastern Tang, in the East Heaven Region.”

“After the people dispatched from the main headquarters of the clan arrive, they will escort you back to Broad Creed Mountain.”

Elder Qin now turned to look at Yan Zhaoge. “Zhaoge, you go with her as well. Having encountered a setback this time, the Sacred Sun Clan will very likely target you after this.”

“After returning to the clan, you can just focus on helping this Little Friend regain her Extreme Yin Physique.”

Yan Zhaoge answered, “Thank you for your concern, Elder. However, I am preparing to continue staying in the Eastern Tang for a period of time. There are still some things that require my preparations.”

“Just escort Junior Sister Feng back to the clan as quickly as possible—I will return as soon as I have finished the matter at hand.”

“In this period of time, I will try to keep indoors as much as possible, as well as act in a low profile manner, not giving the Sacred Sun Clan a chance to make a move.”

Elder Qin knit his brows slightly. “What other matters are there that you still have to handle?”

Before Yan Zhaoge could reply, Yan Xu said slowly from the side, “Indeed, there are some matters that require his clarification.”

As Elder Qin directed his gaze over, Yan Xu said, “Our clan’s disciple Lin Yushao was killed in the Eastern Tang, and she was killed by our clan’s direct lineage martial art, the Tushita Palm.”

“Lin Yushao, this name...if this old man doesn’t remember wrongly, Zhaoge...” Elder Qin’s tone did not fluctuate as his gaze fell on Yan Zhaoge once more.

His expression steady, Yan Zhaoge nodded. “It was this disciple who brought her back to the Mountain, and guided her into our clan.”

“Like Ye Jing, she also hailed from the East Heaven Region’s Eastern Tang Kingdom.”

“In the past, we were lovers.” As he said this, Yan Zhaoge choked up a little.

Yan Zhaoge naturally felt some sadness and pity within his heart at the harm that befell Lin Yushao. After all, it was a human life. Regardless of who had been right or wrong, it had at the very least not been to the extent that a life had to be claimed.

Strictly speaking, though, the two had never even spoken a single word, his only understanding of her having come from looking

through the memories of his body's original owner, which had been like watching a movie being projected.

Putting aside the memories of his body's original owner, Yan Zhaoge had never even met Lin Yushao in person before.

If he said that he was inconsolable over this incident, who would believe it?

However, in the eyes of others, the two were lovers. Thus, Yan Zhaoge could only put on a sad expression on his face, slowly saying, "While in the Luliao Mountains, I had already received news of this."

"It was only that I had an important task on hand back then, and could only complete it first before caring about my own personal matters."

"Now that the matter about Junior Sister Feng is temporarily at an end, I request to personally investigate and hunt down the true culprit, to put at ease junior apprentice-sister Lin's soul in heaven."

Yan Xu looked at Yan Zhaoge, saying indifferently, "As this old man sees it, you'd do better to avoid suspicion."

Yan Zhaoge looked at Yan Xu, who did not mind it one bit as he said, "Over at Overlooking Abyss City, there are many rumours flying about which are unfavourable to you."

Elder Qin frowned, “What rumours?”

Yan Xu answered, “It is rumoured that Yan Zhaoge came to walk closer and closer with a young female disciple, Sikong Qing, in the Sealing Dragon Abyss. They now share a close relationship.”

“It was having heard this piece of news that Lin Yushao felt insecure and quickly hurried over to the Eastern Tang.”

Before he had finished all that he had to say, Elder Qin had already understood what was being implied by his words. “These rumours lack substance. They are completely insufficient.”

“While Lin Yushao was from Eastern Tang, she did not have any enemies here,” Yan Xu said. “And what she died to was our clan’s direct lineage martial art, the Tushita palm.”

He looked towards Yan Zhaoge. “This old man checked it personally—the culprit should have had a cultivation of the early outer aura Martial Scholar realm.”

“The Blood Recollection Ceremony is something that can only be used in situations where both parties that were involved are still alive.”

“If both people communicate beforehand in order to tell the same story, the ritual’s effect will still appear normal. Therefore, you, your men, and this Little Friend Feng here are all not suitable

witnesses.”

“Now, with Lin Yushao being dead, there is no one to confirm the facts.”

Yan Xu swivelled his head to look at Elder Qin. “It’s still too early to say anything for sure right now, but this old man believes that Yan Zhaoge should at least avoid suspicion for the moment.”

Hearing his words, Elder Qin slowly nodded.

Yan Zhaoge, however, sniggered.

Elder Qin frowned. “Zhaoge, be mindful of your surroundings.”

Yan Zhaoge retracted his smile and nodded—the very picture of earnestness. “Regarding the early outer aura Martial Scholar realm... I’m no longer in it.”

Having spoken, he externalised his aura, materialising a weapon with his qi to hover in the air around his body.

Yan Xu shot up from his seat, nearly knocking over his chair in the process.

Yan Zhaoge had not made a move all along, keeping his aura-qi within this body such that it was only now that Yan Xu realised that he had actually already stepped into the mid outer aura

Martial Scholar realm.

“But... how is that possible?!” Eyes wide, Yan Xu was flabbergasted to the point of nearly being unable to speak. “He only just broke through from the inner aura stage to the outer aura stage right under this old man’s very eyes not that long ago!”

HSSB 64: Actions Always Speak Louder Than Words

“How long has it been since he broke through from the inner aura stage to the early outer aura Martial Scholar realm?”

Yan Xu stared at Yan Zhaoge, unable to speak for a long time.

“Before, he was holding himself back, having always been hiding his true cultivation realm?” This was the first thought that flashed through Yan Xu’s mind.

Other than that, he really couldn’t find any reason to convince himself with.

Over the many years of his life, Yan Xu could be considered as having seen many things and accumulated much knowledge. Being from Broad Creed Mountain, a Sacred Ground, he had naturally also seen who knows how many geniuses and outstanding figures.

Moreover, when he himself had been young, he had personal experience associating with many prominent figures of the same generation.

Yan Xu himself having been able to step into the Martial Grandmaster realm was also a feat that few others could claim to match.

From the past to the present, the stories of various legendary figures that had entered his ears were even more numerous.

But there had never ever been a single person who had, soon after breaking through from the late inner aura stage to the early outer aura stage, been able to immediately progress a step further and step into the mid outer aura stage of the Martial Scholar realm.

In the past, the speed of cultivation shown by Yan Zhaoge's father Yan Di had shocked the world, achieving what many other geniuses might not even be able to achieve in their entire lifetime.

However, in comparing simply how fast they stepped from the early outer aura stage into the mid outer aura stage, even Yan Di was left in the dust by Yan Zhaoge.

True, cultivation rates differed among martial practitioners. There were indeed some people who progressed especially quickly during one or more particular cultivation stages, not only training faster than the ordinary practitioner but also being more successful in their daily cultivation.

But Yan Zhaoge's speed... Really, this was just too much!

It completely overturned Yan Xu's worldview and common sense.

Considering it was already like this for Yan Xu, even less had to

be said for the others who understood the implications—they were all staring wide-eyed and slack-jawed at this revelation.

Those who had not been clear on the relevant details also froze up on the spot after listening to the explanation.

While there was a saying that ‘geniuses who died young did not truly count as geniuses’ and only those who were successful in converting their innate potential into true power could then be counted as such, the Yan Zhaoge before them really surpassed all their expectations by far too much.

Those geniuses who were truly able to reach the heights initially predicted of them were few in number. In trying to do so, they would inevitably face numerous hardships and difficulties—much like how huge waves would sweep over and engulf pebbles to clean them. However, with the level of potential that Yan Zhaoge was exhibiting now, it was truly hard for one to believe that he would die young.

Seeing this scene from the side, Feng Yunsheng felt her heart grow much more at ease.

Initially, having found out that Yan Zhaoge had managed to step from the early to the mid outer aura stage in such a short time, she too had been greatly shocked.

Now that there were so many people ‘accompanying’ her, Feng Yunsheng finally managed to regain a bit of her self-confidence. “So it was indeed not just me being ignorant and ill-informed.”

She appraised Yan Zhaoge, murmuring in a low voice that only she herself could hear, “But however I look at it, it just doesn’t seem like something that a human being can achieve...”

Hearing this, Elder Qin was also slightly dazed. As Yan Zhaoge’s position was unique, he had sent a report to Elder Qin and the clan to notify them about his breakthrough when he had successfully stepped into the early outer aura Martial Scholar realm in Overlooking Abyss City.

Therefore, Elder Qin was also taken aback by this. However, Yan Zhaoge had just formed weapons with his aura, which were now hovering and surrounding him. This was already sufficient to prove that he indeed currently had a cultivation of the mid outer aura Martial Scholar realm.

“Good. Very good.” Elder Qin sucked in a deep breath as he nodded repeatedly.

Whether or not Yan Zhaoge had been intentionally concealing his cultivation base, having caused all this commotion on purpose, was something that Elder Qin did not care about at this moment. He could just slowly investigate whether such was really the case on a later date.

However, to the current Broad Creed Mountain, having produced such a dragon among dragons who looked to be able to suppress all the other monstrous geniuses would inevitably come as a huge boost to their morale.

Finally regaining his wits, Yan Xu said in a heavy tone, “Early outer aura Martial Scholars would be unable to falsify and create the scene of a mid outer aura Martial Scholar making a move.”

“However, the contrary would be a very simple thing.”

Yan Zhaoge said in a tone that was neither strong nor mild, “For anyone with a cultivation above the early outer aura Martial Scholar realm who has cultivated our clan’s Tushita Palm, doing such a thing would indeed be simple.”

Yan Xu’s eyes gradually narrowed, the gaze with which he looked at Yan Zhaoge turning cold.

Looking totally at ease, Yan Zhaoge continued, “Elder Yan, your men examined the corpse—you should know when calamity befell junior apprentice-sister Lin?”

Yan Xu immediately reported a time.

He looked towards Yan Zhaoge, “The time of death was before you met with Zhao Shilie, Zhao Yuan, Zhao Sheng and the others.”

“Those who were with you at the time were only your followers and her,” Yan Xu said with a sidelong glance at Feng Yunsheng, “All of whom are unable to testify for you.”

One party consisted of the right hand-men Yan Di had prepared for Yan Zhaoge, who naturally only followed Yan Zhaoge's orders.

The other had need of Yan Zhaoge to help her regain her Extreme Yin Physique as well as recommend her into Broad Creed Mountain.

Yan Zhaoge calculated silently for a moment before beginning to laugh nonchalantly. "By coincidence, I had just encountered this Junior Sister Feng at the time. In order to protect her, I even beat up Xiao Shen and Chao Yuanlong for a bit."

"If my people as well as Junior Sister Feng's words are insufficient to stand as evidence, you can ask for confirmation from Xiao Shen and the others over at the Sacred Sun Clan."

Everyone present suddenly all fell into a deep silence.

They had all acutely detected something in the words Yan Zhaoge had just used to defend himself.

As Yan Zhaoge would have it, not only Chao Yuanlong but also even Xiao Shen had been defeated at his hands?

Before this, they had all known that the person who had been in charge of pursuing Feng Yunsheng had been Xiao Shen. They also knew that Yan Zhaoge had clashed with the Sacred Sun Clan in order to protect her.

However, their thoughts then were that it shouldn't have been a straight-on confrontation with Xiao Shen. At most, Yan Zhaoge had probably only clashed once more with Chao Yuanlong and the other Sacred Sun Clan disciples.

Now that they knew that Yan Zhaoge had already stepped into the mid outer aura Martial Scholar realm, he should indeed have been able to secure his own safety and retreat even if he had to face Xiao Shen himself.

If he could do so even while protecting Feng Yunsheng, as the difficulty of such a feat was really not low, it would already be enough for people to sigh in admiration.

After all, Xiao Shen was no ordinary late outer aura Martial Scholar.

However, it now seemed that the truth of the matter surpassed everyone's expectations once again?

At first, everyone's attention had been focused on Feng Yunsheng's Extreme Yin Physique, as well as the attack from the Sacred Sun Clan that had come afterward.

In doing so, however, they had overlooked the matter of how exactly Yan Zhaoge had managed to wrest Feng Yunsheng from Xiao Shen's hands, bringing her back to the Eastern Tang in one piece.

Yan Xu stared at Yan Zhaoge, “You mean to say... you defeated Xiao Shen?”

Yan Zhaoge acted as though it was perfectly natural. “Didn’t Elder Yan already know that I met with the Eastern Tang’s Prince Jin as well as Brother Zhao Yuan and the others before this?”

“Looks like there are still some matters that you have not been informed of, huh?”

Yan Xu frowned. “What are you trying to say?”

Yan Zhaoge put both his hands behind his back, smiling slightly, “Oh, it’s nothing. After the matters currently on hand have been settled, I will be reporting it to Elder Qin.”

“If Elder Qin doesn’t mind, someone of your position, Elder Yan, should be able to listen from the side.”

Yan Zhaoge said, not sounding flustered in the least, “As for whether or not I could have defeated Xiao Shen, proving this point will be very easy.”

“Actions always speak louder than words.”

“Out of our clan’s late outer aura Martial Scholars here, just randomly pick one of them, and have them spar with me.”

Arrogant!

This was the first thought that flashed across everyone's minds.

Yan Xu didn't say a word. After staring closely at Yan Zhaoge for a moment, he swivelled his head to look at Elder Qin.

A rather interested expression could be seen on Elder Qin's face. He was not in a hurry at all, as he remained sitting silently on his chair.

Seeing this, Yan Xu knew that Elder Qin had agreed to the matter. Turning, he called out some orders. Very quickly, a big, burly man walked into the hall.

"The two of you can spar here; this old man shall protect the place."

Just having said this, he saw Elder Qin say with a shake of his head, "At the end of the day, this space is still limited. For the aerial advantage of later outer aura Martial Scholars to be properly displayed, since they want to spar, they should do it outside."

Yan Zhaoge smiled lightly, "Actually, it'd make no difference at all."

His words just having landed, he exerted a force with his feet, an explosive power instantly bursting forth!

With a single stride, he was already directly in front of that big man!

...

HSSB 65: There Was A Yan Wudi Before, There Is Still A Yan Wudi Now!

The aura-qi within Yan Zhaoge's dantian, one active, one passive, clumped together to form the figures of a turtle and a snake that exhibited the profoundness of the transformations of yin and yang.

The Xuanwu Fist technique relied on using the Ocean Stabilising Fist as well as the Heavenly Snake King Fist simultaneously to form the image of Xuanwu and shock the Door of Blood into erupting with an incomparably terrifying power.

Yan Zhaoge strode out and was instantly before the big man.

Never mind that it was within the hall—even if it had been in a wide, spacious region outside, this big man with a cultivation of the late outer aura Martial Scholar realm still wouldn't have had the time to stimulate his aura-qi and levitate!

The power throughout Yan Zhaoge's entire body erupted. With a flip of his palm, he struck outwards!

The surface of his palm was entirely purplish red, with sweltering heat that caused the big man to feel as though he had fallen into a furnace. It was precisely Broad Creed Mountain's direct lineage martial art, the Tushita Palm.

While the big man was indeed shocked by Yan Zhaoge's speed, he was, after all, a late outer aura Martial Scholar. He immediately

raised his arms as he moved both his palms as he would blades.

His aura-qi surged, forming two swords which danced about within the air.

The two sword-auras flew, one above, one below, the former moving to meet Yan Zhaoge's incoming palm, the latter chopping towards Yan Zhaoge's chest.

The sword-auras glowed brightly, emitting a massive and unending cold, gloomy feeling as tens of thousands of images flickered to life in the surrounding air.

One of the Eight Extreme Arts, the Eight Sceneries Spirit Blade!

Unlike the Chaotic Elements Uniting Blade which was tough and unyielding beyond compare, the Eight Sceneries Spirit Blade had many profound transformations.

It was actually more similar to the kind of martial art that the Sacred Sun Clan's Sunset Thousand Illusory Palm was.

The only difference was that, amongst the Eight Extreme Arts, the Eight Sceneries Spirit Blade and the Tushita Palm just so happened to possess a suppressive effect on each other. From a certain perspective, the martial art the big man was using now was a counter to the Tushita Palm!

As the sword-light spread and suffused the area, it could vaguely

be seen that an Eight Sceneries Palace had appeared right before Yan Zhaoge.

While these furnace flames were not mere lights, as the purple Tushita flames encountered the lanterns which illuminated the Eight Sceneries Palace, they instantly became less vigorous than before.

As the sword-light spun, it was as though it had transformed into a massive palace lantern as it crashed straight towards Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge's expression did not change as he totally ignored the sword-light that was chopping towards him.

His Door of Blood shuddered, the turtle and the snake combining their powers as the power of the descended divine Xuanwu erupted completely, bolstering his Tushita Palm.

The purple colour within Yan Zhaoge's palm grew even denser. As his aura-qi surged, the vague image of a massive pill cauldron was formed!

The pill furnace slammed straight into the Eight Sceneries Palace lantern that the sword-aura had transformed into, the strong and violent power instantly breaking the lantern apart!

The hairs on the big man's entire body stood on end as he instantly realized that the power that Yan Zhaoge could erupt with was even fiercer than his, and even his speed was superior!

In this contest of attacks, before his sword-aura could connect, Yan Zhaoge would definitely have already landed a palm strike on the crown of his head!

The big man had no choice. Moving his body, he immediately retracted his sword to defend himself.

Having lost the chance to take the initiative, there was no longer any hope for him to get it back.

Yan Zhaoge let out a breath as he began striking out continuously with his palm. Under his tempestuous storm of attacks, his opponent was forced into constant retreat.

The big man had originally thought that such ferocious attacks would be hard for Yan Zhaoge to sustain for too long. However, he eventually found that these attacks seemed like they had no end.

He couldn't even put some distance between them, so encompassing was the threat of Yan Zhaoge's palm.

Biting his teeth, the big man spun his body around and chopped out with his backhand, actually throwing all thoughts of his own safety aside as he decided to fight offense with offense!

However, Yan Zhaoge leapt abruptly, the power that he was currently erupting with actually rising by yet another level!

Of the Six Spirits Demonic Fist, the Mighty Ape Demonic Fist boasted the greatest instant increase in power!

In this moment, Yan Zhaoge's speed as well as strength increased yet again, completely surpassing everyone's expectations.

As Yan Zhaoge leapt, he avoided the big man's Eight Sceneries Spirit Blade, his palm arriving right before the latter!

Elder Qin, who had been silently observing the battle all along, let out an emotional, praise-filled sigh.

With the release of a formless pressure, the distance between the two combatants instantly increased.

The next moment, the two had already regained their pre-sparring positions.

The clash between the two had actually only happened in a single breath, the time it took a leaping rabbit to land back on the ground. However, it had contained a whole series of extremely intense offensive and defensive movements one after another.

Everyone else couldn't help but simultaneously sigh as the gazes with which they looked at Yan Zhaoge were filled with shock and awe.

The Yan Zhaoge before them had actually really surpassed levels to defeat a late outer aura Martial Scholar expert of their clan.

This big man was no ordinary late outer aura Martial Scholar either; what he trained in were Broad Creed Mountain's direct lineage Clear Qi Profound Art and Eight Sceneries Spirit Blade.

He was also a veteran of a hundred battles, possessing a rich combat experience. This was the kind of opponent that most young geniuses would be the most unhappy having to face.

However, he had been defeated by Yan Zhaoge cleanly and decisively.

Although the big man had not predicted that Yan Zhaoge would erupt so suddenly and seize the initiative and thus lost out in that aspect of the fight, there hadn't been any flaws in how he reacted to the situation throughout the remainder of the contest. He had already performed as well as he could under those circumstances, yet he had still been defeated by Yan Zhaoge.

His defeat had seen Yan Zhaoge fighting him head-on with a higher level of power; it could in no way be dismissed as mere luck.

Yan Xu stared at Yan Zhaoge.

“While the Clear Qi Profound Art was indeed their base, many of the techniques you utilized were not of my Broad Creed Mountain.”

Yan Zhaoge said calmly, “I did not secretly learn the martial arts

of other powers—I simply had some fortuitous encounters.”

“Speaking of which, Elder, don’t you also cultivate in martial arts obtained outside of Broad Creed Mountain?’

“The ownerless martial legacies that this disciple obtained from outside can be contributed to our clan’s Martial Repository in exchange for our clan’s elite martial arts. If I want to, I can also keep them to myself. This seems to be in accordance to the clan’s rules.”

Yan Xu let out a cold snort, not saying anything further.

Elder Qin, on the other hand, didn’t really care about this. His face was filled with praise as he slowly nodded to Yan Zhaoge.

This Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioner whom Yan Zhaoge had just defeated was actually somewhat weaker than Xiao Shen.

However, the result of this battle had already proven that Yan Zhaoge at least did have a chance of beating Xiao Shen head-on.

Martial practitioners of a slightly lower cultivation could surpass and defeat opponents of a higher cultivation level by utilizing superior experience, talent, mental strength, or quality of martial arts. While this didn’t often happen, it was still not that uncommon.

However, the higher the overall cultivation of the respective parties, the rarer it was to see the surpassing of levels to defeat opponents of a higher level.

To be able to attain a higher cultivation realm, everyone's level of talent and fortuitous encounters couldn't have been too terrible. The higher the level of cultivation base, the more this was true.

Amongst people of the same age and members of the same generation, this was even more applicable.

"I have offended you," Yan Zhaoge cupped his hands towards the big man before continuing, "If Xiao Shen doesn't admit it, I'll just find him for another bout whenever—that'll do."

At that moment, someone entered to report that the the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Zhao Shicheng, had arrived in person.

As Yan Xu and Yan Zhaoge got up and welcomed him in together, the first thing that Zhao Shicheng said when he saw Yan Zhaoge was, "What cultivation realm have you attained? Under what kind of situation was it that you defeated Xiao Shen and obtained his Radiant Sun Wheel?"

As these words left his mouth, the gazes of everyone within the hall all landed on Yan Zhaoge.

Smiling slightly, Yan Zhaoge said, "I won against him in a one versus one fight, then obtained his Radiant Sun Wheel with the

help of my Jade Dragon Sword.”

Having heard the details and the result of that fight, the Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners all sighed in unison, questioning no further.

Rather it was Zhao Shicheng who was a little surprised as he went on to ask a few more questions.

Yan Zhaoge answered all of them, to which Zhao Shicheng exclaimed emotionally, “Ah, Yan Di has a great successor!”

Everyone present nodded unconsciously.

Someone exclaimed, “Yet another Yan Wudi!”

In his younger years, Yan Zhaoge’s father, Yan Di, had outshone all of his peers to remain undefeated amongst the Eight Extremities World’s younger generation.

Back then, as a Martial Scholar, Yan Di had been invincible amongst all Martial Scholars.

It was to the extent that eventually his contemporary Martial Scholars no longer addressed him by his original name, rather adding a ‘wu’ character between his surname and given name.

Read that way, Yan Invincible!

This title was used all the way up till Yan Di ascended into the Martial Grandmaster realm.

However, as Yan Di's cultivation had progressed these past few years, his strength had also steadily risen. The suffocating pressure that he had once brought to Martial Scholars everywhere was now gradually beginning to return and envelop all the Martial Grandmasters of this world.

The day that the name of Yan Wudi once again resounded throughout this world was not far off.

As the words left that person's mouth, even if it was Elder Qin or Zhao Shicheng, they also did not openly refute them, as their gazes instead gradually brightened.

As they looked at Yan Zhaoge, the same thought vaguely appeared within all their hearts.

There was a Yan Wudi before; there is still a Yan Wudi now!

Furthermore, the Yan Zhaoge before them somehow seemed to be growing at an even more monstrous rate than his father before him!

HSSB 66: No Longer Viewing Him In The Same Light

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, Zhao Shicheng nodded his head slowly, “Zhaoge had originally already possessed outstanding talent. Looking at it now, it had actually yet to be fully put on display in the past.”

“It was only today that he truly revealed the lofty heights he had attained, and revealed the strength that he had been accumulating for so long.”

Yan Zhaoge cupped his hands towards Zhao Shicheng, “Uncle overpraises me.”

“On the contrary, I have troubled Uncle this time.”

In having joined hands with Elder Qin in repelling the East Rising Lord of the Sacred Sun Clan, Zhao Shicheng had undoubtedly already made a clear choice between the two Sacred Grounds.

As a part of the Heaven Domain’s East Heaven Region, the Eastern Tang had all along been subordinate to Broad Creed Mountain.

However, the Sacred Sun Clan was currently strong and powerful, while the Eastern Tang Kingdom was situated directly beside territory of the Fire Domain controlled by it.

The two Sacred Grounds completely breaking out into conflict was something that the Sacred Sun Clan would not want to see, due to the numerous uncertain factors involved. However, if the Sacred Sun Clan wanted to deal with the Eastern Tang Kingdom, it would be as easy as flipping their palm.

Even if Broad Creed Mountain came back to find fault with them later on, if the Eastern Tang Kingdom really incurred losses just like that, it would be a real disaster indeed.

There was always the possibility of being compensated for material as well as territorial losses, but the dead could not be revived.

Zhao Shicheng shook his head, “This time, about the Pill Pavilion’s change in leadership, I had originally already been planning to kick Zhao Shilie out to show the Sacred Sun Clan my stance. Really, it was only a matter of time.”

“This King has always been devoted to Broad Creed Mountain; it’s not like the Sacred Sun Clan did not know that. This time, it was only clearly pushing everything onto the table.”

His old friend’s only son facing danger on Eastern Tang soil, Zhao Shicheng naturally wouldn’t sit there doing nothing.

No matter what, he would support Yan Zhaoge with all his might.

Elder Qin once again made known his stance, “As the situation is unique, this old man will be remaining in the Eastern Tang over this period of time.”

“We will be troubling you, Elder Qin,” Despite facing the great pressure brought about by the Sacred Sun Clan, Zhao Shicheng’s demeanour was calm as always.

He looked towards Yan Zhaoge, “I had not known that you, Zhaoge, actually also had such deep attainments in the dao of alchemy.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “Uncle overpraises me. I myself also only recently received that piece of information and began to study it, thus gaining some attainments in that field. However, it is still insufficient to become a system; more experimentation is still needed.”

Zhao Shicheng sighed, “The Golden Needle Liberating Pill technique, like the Internal Crystal Furnace, was also completely lost following the Great Calamity, only living on within records.”

“Your attainments in the dao of luck, are really too good.”

As Zhao Shicheng spoke, he couldn’t resist joking with Yan Zhaoge for a bit, though his tone and expression still remained rather serious.

Yan Xu and the others were all slightly stunned, “Golden Needle

Liberating Pill?”

Elder Qin, though, having already heard a little about this from the clan’s main headquarters, was not all that surprised.

As the Disciplinary Elder of the entire East Heaven Region, he had naturally been informed by Yan Zhaoge beforehand over this period of time when the latter had wanted to engage in some activities here.

“Didn’t you say before that it was still in the experimental phase? Have you a concrete grasp of it already?” Elder Qin’s face revealed a bit of joy at this.

Yan Zhaoge nodded, smiling, “I’m still in the process of studying it. However, I have already become gradually accustomed to using it on some more entry-level pills and medicines.”

Zhao Shicheng shook his head, “It’s one thing to be able to successfully use it on Treatment Pills, but the Smoke Cloud Powder is definitely not an entry-level medicine; it is already like a divine medicine for the treating of wounds.”

Listening to Elder Qin’s as well as Zhao Shicheng’s words, the others had gradually come to realise what this was all about.

The expressionless Yan Xu had originally had a faint coldness deep within his gaze that was fixed on Yan Zhaoge. However, that had now completely vanished, only a total calmness left behind.

This, however, did not mean that all that had occurred between them in the past had just gone poof in a cloud of smoke.

On the contrary, the way that Yan Xu now looked at Yan Zhaoge was no longer like how a member of the older generation would look down upon a member of the younger generation.

At this moment, he finally put Yan Zhaoge on the same level as himself.

This was even despite the fact that the current Yan Zhaoge's cultivation realm was still far from his.

The Internal Crystal Furnace artifact forging method, the turning of Cloud-Veined Crystals into Jade Essence, the Golden Needle Liberating Pill technique, as well as the unordinary cultivation talent and potential that he himself possessed...

Things like this could happen once or twice, but not thrice.

Once or twice could be attributed to coincidence, to luck. However, if it was like this every time, it could no longer be called a coincidence but a thing of certainty.

Yan Xu took a final calm glance at Yan Zhaoge before retracting his gaze, seemingly no longer paying any attention to him.

But, in truth, this just reflected how determined he truly was, having actually attached even more importance to Yan Zhaoge than before.

Due to considerations on the issue of legacy, when competing members of the senior generation were locked in a stalemate, the presence of an outstanding member of the younger generation was very likely to influence the final decision of the older generation.

Not many people knew, but the caution and fear Yan Xu felt towards Yan Zhaoge and his father far exceeded other people.

This did not merely stem from the competition between factions; it also had to do with his own personal fear, hidden deep within his heart.

As Yan Di grew stronger and stronger, and his power and influence grew greater and greater, Yan Xu was already finding it harder to eat and tougher to sleep.

“What happened that year; if the two of them were to find out that I was related to it...”

“Originally, I had thought that only Yan Di poses a threat, not having expected that not only him, but, a long time later, even this junior poses a massive threat.”

“Because of him, Yan Di’s momentum will only grow, maybe even to the point where he can suppress Elder Fang. If this goes

on...”

Yan Xu sucked in a deep breath, his gaze growing even calmer, while also even darker and gloomier.

Having originally still been slightly hesitant, he had, as of this moment, made up his mind for good.

Meanwhile, the other important martial practitioners of Broad Creed Mountain who were present now held much more complicated feelings than before as they looked at Yan Zhaoge.

Those who were closer to Yan Di’s faction were overjoyed though still finding it a little hard to believe, while those closer to Yan Zhaoge’s second apprentice-uncle’s faction felt incomparably conflicted.

They hailed from Broad Creed Mountain, after all. Their own clan having produced such an up-and-coming genius, the honour was shared with them, and they were happy for the clan as well.

However, this up-and-coming star just had to be from the opposing faction.

Yan Zhaoge could also roughly tell what they were all thinking.

What he had just done was actually just to set up a foundation for later. He was preparing to concoct a particular godly pill as a trump card to help secure his father the position of Clan Chief.

The pill had never appeared in the Eight Extremities World of after the Great Calamity. If it was concocted, no one would be able to recognise it.

It was not like an artifact, a spirit artifact or a weapon, which a martial practitioner could try to communicate with and just test out.

The pill had to be put into the mouth and consumed, and whatever effects it would bring about afterwards was hard to say.

To most, it was a great tonic, but to some, however, it might be a strong poison. This kind of situation could indeed happen.

This would inevitably cause people to have second thoughts. Therefore, Yan Zhaoge needed to prepare a foundation for it beforehand.

He wanted to give people the impression: “In the area of the dao of alchemy, Yan Zhaoge really is not just playing about. In fact, he is actually very proficient in it, and is worthy of our trust.”

In order to not draw too much attention, this foundation had to be built up a step at a time and in gradual phases.

Whilst building up a foundation, he would also be continuing to cement Broad Creed Mountain’s power in the Eastern Tang Kingdom while pushing away the extended claws of the Sacred Sun

Clan, thus achieving many benefits with a single move.

After having fully understood everything that had happened, Elder Qin nodded slightly towards Zhao Shicheng, “I must first congratulate Your Majesty for having produced yet another excellent son.”

Zhao Shicheng’s expression was deep and calm, “Hao’er was definitely out of This King’s expectations. However, there are many things that are still yet to be verified.”

“Also, while Zhao Shilie did lose his share of the Pill Pavilion to Zhaoge, This King knows him too well. He will not retreat so easily.”

“Over the years, he has inserted quite a lot of people into the Pill Pavilion, some of whom hold vital positions. All of this needs to be cleared and taken care of.”

“However, it should be completed within the next few days,” Zhao Shicheng said in a calm manner.

Elder Qin nodded, “This old man naturally knows of the King’s abilities.”

Having said thus, he turned to look at Yan Zhaoge, “Zhaoge, you have consecutively performed yet another huge merit.”

“Let’s not talk about the other rewards first; they will be decided

upon by the clan later on. With my jurisdiction, I can first reward you for your meritorious contributions in the matter of the Pill Pavilion.”

“Having reproduced the ancient Golden Needle Liberating Pill technique that can increase the efficacy of pills and medicines, you also managed to eliminate the Sacred Sun Clan’s encroachment on the Eastern Tang’s Pill Pavilion at the same time.”

“Other than the share of the Pill Pavilion that you won from Prince Jin, the share of the Pill Pavilion that our clan originally held in secret will also all go to you.”

“All the profit that you gain from there will be for you to distribute at your own discretion. If the clan has need of it, we will not let you suffer a loss; we will exchange it with you at the market price or for some other resources that you want.”

“Matters of the Pill Pavilion that are related to our clan will all be decided by you.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly, “I thank Elder Qin.”

The others were all left staring back and forth at one another. Only Yan Xu remained expressionless.

HSSB 67: Pressuring Yan Xu

Looking between Elder Qin, Yan Zhaoge, and Yan Xu, the onlookers suddenly had numerous thoughts flash across their minds.

The Pill Pavilion was the primary source of income for the Eastern Tang's royal family. As the hegemon of the East Heaven Region, Broad Creed Mountain naturally also laid claim to a share of the profits.

On one hand, it was a symbolic gesture which guaranteed Broad Creed Mountain's position and benefits in the Eastern Tang.

On the other, for the pills and medicines of the Pill Pavilion to be exported in large quantities outside of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Broad Creed Mountain also played a very important role.

Even if there weren't the Golden Needle Liberating Pill technique or the Smoke Cloud Powder, the Pill Pavilion would still be generating a huge amount of profit.

Previously, the relationship between the clan and the Pill Pavilion had been managed by the Eastern Tang's Disciplinary Elder. This definitely fell within his jurisdiction, so it made sense that he had this power.

However, Yan Zhaoge had personally obtained Zhao Shilie's share of the Pill Pavilion—and it was a fairly huge at that. According to common sense, Yan Zhaoge should hand it over to

the clan, whereupon it would be managed alongside the clan's own share of the Pill Pavilion. In return, Yan Zhaoge would be rewarded in some other form.

Of course, this naturally meant that all of it would be handed over to the Eastern Tang Principal Elder—Yan Xu.

But right now, it seemed that the entire situation had been flipped on its head. Instead of it going to Yan Xu, the clan's original share of the Pill Pavilion was also going to be completely transferred to Yan Zhaoge.

Without even discussing the specifics of their value, just the concept of giving away his authority over the Pill Pavilion was like taking a knife and carving the meat off Yan Xu's body.

The other martial practitioners looked on with some measure of bewilderment towards Elder Qin. Even the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Zhao Shicheng, seemed shocked as he sized up the situation.

Elder Qin retained a peaceful expression, as did Yan Xu.

Witnessing this scene, Yan Zhaoge put on a smiling expression but said nothing.

Regarding the struggle between Yan Zhaoge's father Yan Di and his second apprentice-uncle Fang Zhun, Elder Qin still remained neutral.

Although Elder Qin's impression of Yan Zhaoge had changed to one of extreme admiration, this was still not sufficient for him to lean towards Yan Di's faction.

Elder Qin's current actions killed two birds with one stone. On one hand, he was rewarding Yan Zhaoge for the various merits the other had earned for the clan. On the other hand, he was also putting a little bit of pressure on Yan Xu as a warning.

Previously, Wen Ningzhi had tried to act against Yan Zhaoge, instead ending up harming himself. Him being Yan Xu's trusted subordinate, Elder Qin naturally had to focus his gaze on the Eastern Tang and Yan Zhaoge.

Regarding Lin Yushao's death, even though no final conclusion could be definitively reached, it seemed like Yan Zhaoge was at least temporarily able to cast off any suspicions.

As for just who had caused her demise, that was naturally an important question worthy of a detailed investigation.

At any rate, the body had first been discovered by a subordinate of Yan Xu and was currently being watched over by his people as well. The fatal wound had been caused by the Tushita Palm, which Yan Xu himself was also proficient in. With his cultivation base, if he wanted to mimic the attack of an early outer aura Martial Scholar, that would naturally be simplicity itself.

Elder Qin was also quite sure that Lin Yushao had not actually

been killed by Yan Xu, but there was no telling. Perhaps Yan Xu had made some moves in order to deal with Yan Zhaoge, and was the culprit in truth.

Presently, the fact that he was stripping away a portion of Yan Xu's authority and instead conferring it onto Yan Zhaoge was a clear warning for Yan Xu.

With regard to the competition between Yan Di and Fang Zhun for the seat of Clan Chief, Elder Qin was a neutral party who did not participate in the struggle. However, his character dictated that there was a moral bottom line that neither party should ever cross.

“The amount of revenue being generated is only one aspect.” Yan Zhaoge leisurely thought, “Before, I was only a foppish master spending money hand over foot. Now, perhaps this can be counted as me finally earning some money?”

Elder Qin continued, “You also found a Maiden of Extreme Yin and convinced her to swear loyalty to the clan—this is also a contribution that cannot be understated.”

“Discovering the Golden Needle Liberating Pill technique and winning a share of the Pill Pavilion, refining the Internal Crystal Furnace, as well as discovering the use of Cloud-Veined Crystal in producing Jade Essence...every single one of these is a meritorious contribution.”

“If Young Friend Feng manages to regain her Extreme Yin

Physique, the clan will naturally have an enormous reward for you.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded his head. Even though he didn't know the specifics, he was still a little bit expectant about his reward from the clan.

Elder Qin continued, “You were able to defeat Xiao Shen and spread the fame of my Broad Creed Mountain. Even though the matter with the Maiden of Extreme Yin cannot be made public, you will still be rewarded by the clan.”

“As for what these rewards will be, that has to be decided back at the clan. This old man is not qualified to make such decisions; at the end of the day, you are not actually a martial practitioner stationed in the East Heaven Region.”

“However, you having consecutively earned so many merits, the clan will also not instead become stingier as a result. If you have your eye on any specific reward, just let me know and I will report it back to the clan.”

“You know all the rules, and won't request anything unrealistic.”

Hearing what was said, Yan Zhaoge slightly laughed and nodded his head, “Many thanks to Elder Qin. I won't hide it from you; I really do have my eyes on something.”

Elder Qin asked, “Huh? What thing?”

Yan Zhaoge laughed, “I actually want something of yours, that Nine Treasure Ice Gourd which originates from the Thunder Domain’s Lonely Gorge Mountain.”

With some astonishment, Elder Qin asked, “You have some treasure that needs to be stored for a long time?”

“This old man knew that you had obtained the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul, and had originally planned to give you its entire skeleton as well.”

“But, having collected the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul, a large amount of Profound Jade should be sufficient.”

Yan Zhaoge spoke again, “It really isn’t the Glacial Dragon’s skeleton, instead being something else. I wonder if you, Elder, would be willing to part with it?”

Waving his hands, Elder Qin directly took out a white-colored gourd and handed it over to Yan Zhaoge, “What is there to be unwilling about?”

“Even though this item is rather rare, it really isn’t all that valuable. This old man happened to chance across one when I was younger, and have possessed it ever since.”

“It is like chicken ribs-tasteless, yet a pity to throw away.”

“If you only want this item, then there is no need to wait for the clan to decide. This old man can just give it to you directly.”

Receiving the Nine Treasures Ice Gourd, Yan Zhaoge immediately felt an icy sensation in his hands. He smiled and replied, “My thanks to Elder.”

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, Elder Qin seemed to have suddenly thought of something as he opened his eyes wide, “You rascal, it must be because you’ve gotten some new idea, right?”

Yan Zhaoge laughed lightly, not concealing the matter, “It’s true that I have something, but it’s still just an idea right now and I don’t know if it will really work. I will have to experiment a little bit.”

Elder Qin pointed at Yan Zhaoge with his forefinger, “Ah, you little rascal. You really don’t let people save worry.”

Even while saying that, his attitude was quite kind and amiable. While looking at Yan Zhaoge, it was clear that his expression held both kindness and praise.

When others heard what they were talking about, they all felt very curious about what new idea Yan Zhaoge might have.

Simply from empirical evidence, it was quite clear that one couldn’t judge Yan Zhaoge by any common standard.

Even though Yan Zhaoge had played down his idea and made it sound plain, it could very well be something pivotal.

Having addressed the issue of Yan Zhaoge's rewards, Elder Qin ordered the clan to make a detailed investigation in the matter of Lin Yushao's untimely death.

Considering that the victim had been murdered in the Eastern Tang, it made sense for the investigation to be under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Tang Principal Elder, Yan Xu.

However, it had quickly become apparent that Yan Xu was unsuited to carrying out the rest of the investigation. As such, Elder Qin tasked his subordinates with continuing to delve deeper into the matter.

With regard to Yan Zhaoge, it was clear that he had absolutely no connection at all with Lin Yushao's death.

Previously, when Yan Zhaoge had actively called for the investigation of the matter, it had simply been to demonstrate his attitude with regard to the affair.

After this, it was very possible that the Sacred Sun Clan would have some movements, making it more important than ever for there to be cooperation between the Eastern Tang and Broad Creed Mountain.

During this period of time, while they were acting in the Eastern

Tang, regardless of whether it was Yan Zhaoge, Elder Qin, or Yan Xu, each one of them naturally wanted to have a mutual understanding with Zhao Shicheng.

Everything having been basically settled, Yan Zhaoge escorted Zhao Shicheng to the door, sending a sound transmission with his aura-qi, “Uncle, I’d like to have a little chat with you regarding your sixteenth son, Zhao Hao.”

HSSB 68: Zhao Hao Is Indeed A Good Person

Glancing at Yan Zhaoge, Zhao Shicheng slowly nodded his head, “I know what you, Zhaoge, want to discuss.”

Conversing with Yan Zhaoge in private, Zhao Shicheng was no longer as formal as before, switching to a very ordinary form of address instead.

“Even if we say that he just came to see the light one fine day, the changes in Hao’er are really just far too great, far too sudden.”

“Not even mentioning the changes in his temperament, his attainment in the dao of alchemy is such that even I would have to admit that mine is inferior. As for his cultivation attainment, while I have still yet to see it, his cultivation speed over the past half year has been far, far greater than before.

Zhao Shicheng was very honest, not looking down on Yan Zhaoge as a member of the younger generation.

As for the earlier Zhao Hao who had been a totally unremarkable character, Zhao Shicheng also could really not say how much he understood about him.

As for the Zhao Hao after the change... if Zhao Shicheng wanted to, he could naturally perform a thorough, clear check of most of the things that Zhao Hao had been involved in since birth. Otherwise, he would have been the head of a Kingdom for nothing.

“If it’s said that he had some extremely fortuitous encounters and obtained some martial legacies or was secretly accepted as a disciple by an expert, his growth would still barely be explainable.”

“However, the dao of alchemy does not merely look at talent but also the accumulating of experience; however did Hao’er attain the lofty heights of now?”

Zhao Shicheng shook his head slightly, “Still, all of this can still be slowly investigated. Having produced an even more outstanding son, it is naturally a good thing for the Eastern Tang.”

As Yan Zhaoge listened, he was also secretly smirking by the side.

To those in positions of power, those beneath them possessing ability was not something to be afraid of. The crux was whether the situation was still within their control.

As long as they did not lose the ability to control the situation, the more capable their subordinates were the better.

Oftentimes, it was not that they had failed to spot their abnormalities and flaws. It was only that even having done so, they would play dumb and observe the situation from the shadows.

Zhao Shicheng was already like this. Yan Zhaoge’s own father, Yan Di, was even harder to fool.

Thus, ever since having crossed over to this world, Yan Zhaoge had been doing everything in gradual phases.

Even if he didn't manage to completely avoid all suspicion, at the very least, the difference between him and his body's original owner could not be too great.

Although he had managed to reproduce the Internal Crystal Furnace, causing it to reappear within this world, that was only the creation of a tool; it had nothing to do with his own proficiency in artifact forging at all. The other artifact refining techniques that Yan Zhaoge used could only be considered somewhat better than average.

The Golden Needle Liberating Pill Technique that had he had let resurface was but a technique. Meanwhile, his overall proficiency in alchemy would gradually improve as time went by, increasing the impression he left on others slowly but surely.

Changes in his martial prowess as well as some strange discoveries could mostly be attributed to fortuitous encounters, or having a sudden flash of inspiration.

Progressing a little slower now was fine—the future whereupon he would spread his wings and soar high into the sky was already close at hand.

Actually, in thinking about it sometimes, Yan Zhaoge would be unable to resist breaking into a laugh. “Zhao Hao is indeed a good

person ah.”

Yan Zhaoge’s current achievements were naturally far higher than that of Zhao Hao.

However, when compared to the Zhao Hao who bared his fangs openly and acted as he liked with hardly any reservation, Yan Zhaoge actually appeared somewhat more normal.

Of course, this was only comparatively.

In many people’s eyes, Yan Zhaoge was similarly high-profile and domineering like there was no tomorrow.

However, as his body’s original owner had also possessed such a temperament, the difference was actually not too great.

Therefore, having told Feng Yunsheng that he was acting low-key, it was because Yan Zhaoge truly felt that he himself was already being pretty low-key.

Faced with Feng Yunsheng’s somewhat disbelieving gaze, Yan Zhaoge really felt like he had been wronged...

With such a personality of loving to act and look cool, he had already been working extremely hard to suppress it!

Zhao Shicheng sighed rather emotionally, “The potential that

Hao'er has currently revealed...even the Fourth Prince cannot compare to it, let alone the First and the Third Princes.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly. Other than the First Prince Zhao Yuan and the Third Prince Zhao Sheng, the Eastern Tang royal family actually still had a Fourth Prince, Zhao Ming.

In terms of cultivation talent alone, not considering the black horse Zhao Hao, Zhao Ming was the first amongst all of Zhao Shicheng's sons, at the same time also the most outstanding talent within the entire Eastern Tang Kingdom's younger generation.

Many years ago, Zhao Ming had already entered Broad Creed Mountain to learn the martial way. He was an official disciple of Broad Creed Mountain.

With Broad Creed Mountain being the overlord of the Heaven Domain and the elites of the Heaven Domain seeing Broad Creed Mountain's glory as their own, most of the top martial talents there had landed within its palm.

It was only that, having entered Broad Creed Mountain as a disciple, the position of the Eastern Tang's next king would no longer have any relation to him if no major incidents happened.

While the Eastern Tang Kingdom was close to and subordinate to Broad Creed Mountain, it did not mean that the Eastern Tang was completely its vassal.

Being able to cultivate in Broad Creed Mountain or ascending as the Eastern Tang's King—which option was better was a matter of personal opinion.

However, Zhao Ming was completely devoted to the martial way, so he was more than happy to enter the Sacred Ground to develop his skills.

While entering Broad Creed Mountain might make it seem like he had separated himself from the Eastern Tang Kingdom, the Eastern Tang could still make use this to improve the relation between the two sides from behind the scenes.

Having always been wholeheartedly devoted to Broad Creed Mountain, Zhao Shicheng had naturally not done something like placing bets on both sides. Thus, other than his fourth son Zhao Ming, who had entered Broad Creed Mountain, all of his other sons remained in the Eastern Tang.

Other than that, it was also worth mentioning that the son of Zhao Shilie, Prince Jin, had entered the Sacred Sun Clan.

The relationship between Zhao Shilie and the Sacred Sun Clan was remarkably close as a result, causing the Sacred Sun Clan's influence in the Eastern Tang to be constantly encroaching.

Yan Zhaoge and Zhao Shicheng both did not mention this matter as though under a tacit agreement.

Yan Zhaoge said slowly, “I am unable to exactly determine Brother Zhao Hao’s situation. However, according to my conjecture, the changes on his body should be related to the Martial Saint expert of old, the Pill Fire Divine Sword Gao Zhe—perhaps he obtained his legacy.”

It was already enough that he had said that much.

Zhao Shicheng nodded his head, pondering deeply for a moment. “Excelling in sword arts as well as the dao of alchemy... The Smoke Cloud Powder... En, there is indeed this possibility.”

He raised his head to glance at Yan Zhaoge, “If I’m not remembering wrong, it was rumored that the Pill Fire Divine Sword’s relationship with Broad Creed Mountain was quite strained?”

Yan Zhaoge answered candidly, “I am not clear on the exact reason, but that is indeed true.”

“Other than that, it is not known if Gao Zhe passed down a message along with his legacy, and also what exactly Brother Zhao Hao inherited from him, having caused him to seem to be slightly hostile towards our clan.”

Zhao Shicheng sighed. “Having heard the report from my men, I also know of this matter.”

“Relax—I will work on clearing up that hostility. If no progress is

made this way, other arrangements will naturally be made.”

His personal ties with Yan Di aside, Zhao Shicheng also wouldn't let a son possessing hostile intentions towards Broad Creed Mountain become the successor to his throne.

Spending a lot of effort in grooming him was a sure thing, but the throne was something that he would have no hope of sitting on.

Yan Zhaoge bowed. “Uncle has his own arrangements; Zhaoge doesn't dare to speak presumptuously on them. What we have talked about today has already been rather bold of me.”

Zhao Shicheng waved his hands. “It's fine, your father having a son such as you means he has a great successor. It is a blessing—even I am a little envious of him.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled. “I also hope to have a relationship with various Brothers as strong and deep as the friendship between you and Father, Uncle.”

As the head of a Kingdom, perhaps Zhao Shicheng was somewhat acting on his emotions without thinking of the consequences.

However, this Uncle was absolutely loyal towards his father and took extremely good care of him as well.

The private conversation between Zhao Shicheng and Yan Zhaoge was naturally noted by Yan Xu.

His expression didn't change, as he just minded his own business and walked off in another direction.

Following behind him, a person said rather worriedly, "Yan Zhaoge actually defeated the late outer aura Martial Scholar Xiao Shen with his mid outer aura Martial Scholar cultivation base."

"If this goes on, I'm afraid Lu Wen..."

Yan Xu momentarily stopped in his tracks, his expression having turned a little dark and gloomy.

Lu Wen was the direct disciple of Yan Zhaoge's second apprentice-uncle Fang Zhun, another elite of Broad Creed Mountain's younger generation and an existence with much face.

He was older than Yan Zhaoge and begun cultivating earlier than him as well. He was currently twenty-five, the same age as Xiao Shen.

Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan had been clashing for a long time.

Before the abnormalities in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, it had always been Yan Zhaoge against Chao Yuanlong and Lu Wen against Xiao Shen. The two sides were evenly matched, each possessing their own strengths.

Now, Lu Wen was currently in secluded cultivation back at Broad Creed Mountain. As a late outer aura Martial Scholar just like Xiao Shen, this secluded cultivation session was for him to attempt to break through the bottleneck and step into the Xiantian Martial Scholar realm before the latter did.

Lu Wen having seized the preemptive, he was already slightly ahead of Xiao Shen. If he could break through to become a Xiantian Martial Scholar first, he would really be a step ahead of him.

But no one could have predicted Yan Zhaoge's sudden, even more domineering rise to power, not only suppressing the similarly-aged Chao Yuanlong, but also now having surpassed levels to defeat Xiao Shen.

Even his own cultivation was getting closer and closer to Lu Wen's.

After thinking deeply for a moment, Yan Xu recovered his usual expression as he said indifferently, "All is still too early to tell."

HSSB 69: A Rare Opportunity

On a hill far away from Jingyang City, a few figures were standing silently, gazing at the distant Eastern Tang capital.

The sunlight fell on them, causing their golden robes to look even more dazzling and eye-catching.

The middle-aged man leading them was precisely the Sacred Sun Clan's Elder, the East Rising Lord of the Seven Reigning Suns.

Beside the East Rising Lord stood a golden-robed Elder, the Sacred Sun Clan's Principal Elder in the lands of the Eastern Tang. Other than that, there were also some other Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners present.

Amongst the crowd there stood a white-clothed youth, his face filled with a long, thick beard. While he looked like a gallant and unrestrained person, his eyes actually harboured the coldness of a snake.

The youth's face was still a little pale. As he looked in the direction of Jingyang City, his gaze was filled with anger and resentment.

Naturally, this youth was Xiao Shen.

At this moment, the hatred he felt towards Yan Zhaoge was no less than his hatred of Feng Yunsheng in the slightest.

Not only had Yan Zhaoge defeated him, having already caused him to lose a lot of face; earlier, in broad daylight in front of everyone, Yan Zhaoge had even publicised the matter of him having had his lower body injured by Feng Yunsheng.

Xiao Shen's entire face had been completely ripped apart.

Him having been injured by Feng Yunsheng had always been firmly kept under wraps; even within the higher echelons of the Sacred Sun Clan, those who knew about it were also limited.

Now, however, everyone knew.

Although none of the others were looking at him, standing within the crowd at this moment, Xiao Shen kept having the feeling that there were disdainful and mocking gazes being directed towards him from all around, making him feel extremely uncomfortable.

This anxiety and embarrassment was completely transformed into hatred, directed in great amounts towards Yan Zhaoge.

The golden-robed Elder swivelled his head to look at the East Rising Lord, "Inform the clan to dispatch more experts over; we can't just let it end like this."

"Meng Wan having lost the Extreme Yin Crown last year and Chief having remained in secluded meditation for so long, looks

like some people have forgotten that it is our Sacred Sun Clan who is the current top Sacred Ground!”

“So what if the Eastern Tang Kingdom is in the Heaven Domain? As long as my Sacred Sun Clan is willing, we will likewise trample all over them.”

These words could only be said by the East Rising Lord. Were it someone else, that person would actually be casting doubt on his ability, causing him to feel unhappy instead.

Just standing there, the East Rising Lord resembled a dazzling sun hanging high up within the sky.

He gazed silently at the faraway Jingyang City, “How are our previous preparations?”

The golden-robed Elder slowly shook his head, “Still not thorough enough.”

The East Rising Lord said, “While we haven’t made sufficient preparations, the same also goes for Broad Creed Mountain.”

“However, the current abnormalities in the Sealing Dragon Abyss can help to bolster the areas in which we are lacking, instead giving us the chance to succeed.”

The golden-robed Elder’s spirits instantly lifted, “You’re right; that is indeed the case.”

The East Rising Lord turned to look at Xiao Shen, “All other things aside, it seems that Yan Zhaoge wouldn’t be hard-pressed to defeat you?”

“My abilities are slightly inferior,” Sucking in a deep breath, Xiao Shen replied with much difficulty.

The East Rising Lord gazed towards Jingyang City once again, “Your cultivation is a level higher than his, but you are still slightly inferior. If the two of you were at the same cultivation level, I’m afraid the result wouldn’t have been much better than in Yuanlong’s case.”

Clenching his fists tightly, Xiao Shen lowered his head.

The East Rising Lord said mildly, “Looking at it like this, it is like I have seen yet another Zhan Dongge, yet another Yan Di; or a potential which surpasses even theirs.”

“This type of good seed; what a pity that it still originates from Broad Creed Mountain.”

“It would be best if we could deal with him before he grows up.”

Hearing his words, Xiao Shen’s breathing instantly sped up.

The East Rising Lord did not look back at him, “Just wait

patiently. Perhaps you will have a chance to personally kill Yan Zhaoge and avenge yourself.”

“Being able to personally slaughter Yan Zhaoge-there is nothing better I could ask for.” Xiao Shen’s breathing stabilised as he said in a lighter tone.

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Having taken his leave of Zhao Shicheng, as Yan Zhaoge left the residence, he saw Ah Hu waiting for him there.

Walking up to him, Ah Hu gave a simple laugh, “Young Master, how’d it go?”

Yan Zhaoge shrugged, “Junior apprentice-sister Feng will be escorted back to the clan’s main headquarters. Meanwhile, we will continue staying here; I still have matters to attend to.”

“Both Yan Xu and I will not interfere in junior apprentice-sister Lin’s matter. Yan Xu will hand over the things in his hands to me, though I don’t think he’s given up yet.”

At this point, Yan Zhaoge ordered, “Ah Hu, about the matter of harm befalling junior apprentice-sister Lin, get people to take note of the direction of the rumours. If there are any changes, notify me immediately.”

Ah Hu scratched at his head, “Young Master, what kind of

changes do you mean?”

“Now, the direction of the rumours is that junior apprentice-sister Lin came to bother me due to jealousy, ending up with me accidentally killing her out of impatience.”

Yan Zhaoge narrowed his eyes, “If the direction of the rumours changes, saying that junior apprentice-sister Lin still remained fond of Ye Jing and had actually come to re-enter his embrace, instead being beaten to death by a furious me, that could only mean one thing...”

“Yan Xu-it’s possible that he’s already found Ye Jing.”

“While spreading such rumours would indeed wreck my reputation, they would not harm me at my core. Doing so would only be setting up some sort of foundation for something.”

Yan Zhaoge said leisurely, “I have a feeling that this time, Yan Xu...intends for me never to return to Broad Creed Mountain again.”

Ah Hu stopped laughing, his expression turning grave, “He wants to kill Young Master?”

“But why? There’s no reason for that ah. While you made things difficult for him a few times, even if he is frustrated? and angry, it also shouldn’t be to the extent of wanting to kill you, right?”

“After all, you, Young Master, are different from ordinary members of the younger generation. Unless, Elder Fang...”

After thinking deeply for a time, Yan Zhaoge said, “It shouldn’t be what second apprentice-uncle wishes for; it should be Yan Xu’s own idea. Maybe it was just me hallucinating, but I felt that in junior apprentice-sister Lin’s death this time, Yan Xu’s behaviour was a little weird.”

Ah Hu exclaimed in a deep tone, “Is he crazy? That’s already past what’s acceptable.”

“The potential that you, Young Master, are currently displaying already presides over members of same generation. Elder Fang would be hard-pressed to produce a junior who could contend with you.”

“If something were to happen to you, the Head of our Yan Family aside, the old Clan Chief would already not let him get away with it!”

Yan Zhaoge said mildly, “He obviously wouldn’t bear the blame himself. That Ye Jing is just the best scapegoat for him.”

Ah Hu relaxed, smirking slightly, “Just that Ye Jing, can kill Young Master?”

Yan Zhaoge spread his hands apart, “Haven’t we just offended the Sacred Sun Clan’s people terribly? Moreover, there’re still the

Crimson Spirit Flag Master as well as the Ghost Hatchet Elder who's related to Ye Jing."

"I dying in the hands of Martial Grandmasters would naturally be the most ideal situation for him."

"If Yan Xu had to do it personally, he could just narrate that those Martial Grandmasters who have the ability as well as the motive to heavily injure me did so, before Ye Jing supplemented the final blow."

"If Yan Xu wanted to kill me, it would be much easier than those Martial Grandmasters from outside."

"Elder Qin's arrival has kept back the Sacred Sun Clan's people, but at the same time, those people have also engaged Elder Qin's attention."

"That Yan Xu, has the space to move about as a result."

Ah Hu said earnestly, "Young Master, I seriously advise you to directly return to Broad Creed Mountain alongside Miss Feng."

His hands behind his back, Yan Zhaoge let out a long breath, smiling as he walked, "Ah Hu, to be honest, until just now, I had truly been seriously considering the solution you speak of."

"However, it wasn't for my personal safety, but, rather, that of those of you who follow beside me, who might be inadvertently

dragged into the fray.”

“If it were only myself...” Yan Zhaoge’s smile gradually turned cold, “Even if Yan Xu didn’t make a move on me, I would be thinking of making a move on him!”

“Unlike earlier with Wen Ningzhi and Cui Xin, finding a chance to take down a Principal Elder would really be somewhat tough.”

Yan Zhaoge chuckled, “But at the same time, taking down a Principal Elder would also be a great loss for second apprentice-uncle’s side, in no way comparable to how little they suffered when I took down those two simple Elders of the Assignment Hall of theirs.”

Ah Hu blinked, “Young Master, this is playing with fire ah; you might get yourself burnt badly.”

Yan Zhaoge laughed carelessly, “In this world, what things are there that hold completely no risk?”

Very quickly, the experts from Broad Creed Mountain arrived in Jingyang City.

After conversing for a time, Yan Zhaoge eventually still decided to remain in the Eastern Tang, whilst Feng Yunsheng would return to Broad Creed Mountain alongside those who had arrived.

“Go back and take good care of your injuries to prepare yourself.

When I return, your nightmare will also be beginning,” Yan Zhaoge was all smiles as he looked at Feng Yunsheng, “What awaits you, is suffering beyond your wildest imagination.”

Raising her brows, Feng Yunsheng asked laughingly, “How much suffering is that?”

Yan Zhaoge snapped his fingers, “Tentatively...you will feel that, being pursued by those Sacred Sun Clan disciples out for your life previously, had actually been a pretty leisurely thing indeed.”

HSSB 70: Glacial Dragon's Roar

Feng Yunsheng was to be escorted back to Broad Creed Mountain by some of the clan's experts.

Having considered the recent high tension between Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan, to prepare for the worst, a portion of the experts that had been dispatched over here this time remained to assist Elder Qin in keeping the situation in the Eastern Tang as well as the rest of the East Heaven Region stable, and deal with the Sacred Sun Clan's retaliatory actions that might possibly follow.

After having seen Feng Yunsheng off, Yan Zhaoge returned to his lodgings, pondering as he walked.

This time, they had thoroughly offended the Sacred Sun Clan, and with the level of ability as well as potential that he had been displaying in recent days, it was very likely that they would keep a firm eye on him.

Moreover, there was also a Yan Xu watching him ferociously from the side.

With Yan Zhaoge having stepped into the mid outer aura Martial Scholar realm, even having won against the late outer aura stage Xiao Shen, his entourage of black-clothed martial practitioners was now no longer travelling alongside him.

As guards, they were already not serving much purpose. On the

contrary, staying by Yan Zhaoge's side might inadvertently cause them to become embroiled in the matter, and in that situation, who would be the one protecting who?

Still, the black-clothed martial practitioners did not leave the Eastern Tang Kingdom, having stayed on, ready to follow Yan Zhaoge's orders at any moment.

The group consisting of Yan Zhaoge and Elder Qin soon proceeded to Overlooking Abyss City.

There, Yan Zhaoge and the others saw the corpse of the late Lin Yushao.

It was there that Yan Zhaoge finally got a good look at Lin Yushao's true features for once, as opposed to viewing the memories of his body's original owner which had been like watching a movie on a screen.

As Yan Xu had said, the body's visible wounds all appeared to have been inflicted by an early outer aura Martial Scholar with the Tushita Palm.

The remnant marks left behind by purple Tushita fire permeated her entire body.

...also covering all other traces.

“What a short, unlucky life...” Yan Zhaoge fell silent.

Leaving the place, he gazed up towards the sky, “Ye Jing has really reached this stage?”

“Right, in the icy pond earlier, he seemed to have been injured once again. If he had continued using that secret technique of his to treat his wounds, it would have a severe influence on his mind.”

“That way, it is indeed possible that he would become more violent as well as antagonistic.”

Yan Zhaoge’s gaze turned cold, “If you really want to eliminate yourself from this world, I will personally send you off myself.”

Returning to their lodgings, Ah Hu said in a light tone from beside him, “Young Master.”

Seeing Ah Hu’s smile that appeared simple and honest but was, in actual fact, cheap and dirty, Yan Zhaoge rolled his eyes.

Following Ah Hu’s gaze, he saw a beautiful, graceful girl, currently standing by the roadside.

“Junior apprentice-sister Sikong, you have left seclusion?” Yan Zhaoge asked, “And from the looks of it, you’ve successfully broken through the bottleneck and stepped into the Martial Scholar realm?”

The girl was precisely Sikong Qing, a cold and aloof air about her.

She bowed solemnly towards Yan Zhaoge, “Many thanks for senior apprentice-brother Yan’s earlier pointers. After leaving seclusion, I have specially come to express my gratitude.”

“I have also heard about the matter regarding junior apprentice-sister Lin. My condolences, senior apprentice-brother Yan.”

Yan Zhaoge waved his hands, “I’m fine; thank you for your concern.”

Having said thus, he began appraising her all over, “Not bad, a sixteen year old Martial Scholar is rare even in our clan. Junior apprentice-sister Sikong indeed strives forward with great determination.”

“However, do not be complacent as a result; you should know that the Sacred Sun Clan’s Meng Wan was already a Martial Scholar at the age of fifteen.”

Sikong Qing’s expression was calm, her gaze resolute, “Yes, I know.”

“Neither proud nor impatient-very good,” Yan Zhaoge nodded, “You are completely devoted to the martial dao, with a firm will, so I am also not afraid of dealing you too strong a blow. Other than Meng Wan, the Sacred Sun Clan also had another person who had already stepped into the Martial Scholar realm when she had yet to

turn sixteen.”

“And now, she has joined our clan.”

Sikong Qing said calmly, “I hope to be able to frequently exchange pointers with her in the future; I believe that I would benefit much from the experience.”

Looking at her, Yan Zhaoge suddenly broke into a smile, “However, like Meng Wan, she is also a Maiden of Extreme Yin. Their situations are rather unique; in order to obtain good results in the Extreme Yin Bouts, the Sacred Sun Clan employed some growth accelerating methods in rearing them.”

“This way, their foundation would inevitably be less stable, causing their extraordinary quick cultivation speed to drop to slower than usual in the future.”

“But with the Sacred Sun Clan’s and our own Broad Creed Mountain’s background, even if their future cultivation speed were to decrease, that would only be relative to themselves. They would still be far faster than most people. Also...”

Hearing Yan Zhaoge’s words, Sikong Qing finished his words for him mildly, “Also, the Extreme Yin Crown has the effect of increasing the cultivation speed of Maidens of Extreme Yin.”

“After having secured a victory in the first Extreme Yin Bout, during the year where the Extreme Yin Crown was in her

possession, Meng Wan's cultivation soared by leaps and bounds, being far faster than was usual for her."

"That Senior Sister from Jade Sea City who won the second Extreme Yin Bout over Meng Wan also saw her cultivation progress tremendously after having taken over possession of the Extreme Yin Crown."

Sikong Qing's gaze was resolute and unwavering, "Many thanks to senior apprentice-brother Yan for the reminder. I definitely won't be complacent."

Yan Zhaoge smiled, "Very good. Now that you have already reached the inner aura stage for Martial Scholars, the next step will be to use your newly-formed aura-qi to open the acupoints around your body."

"After that has been achieved, you will have reached the mid inner aura Martial Scholar realm. What comes next would be the washing of the internal organs, strengthening your body a step further."

"When you are capable of forming a wall of qi with the aura-qi within your body, you will have reached the late inner aura stage. At that time, the strength of your body, be it in terms of attack or defence, would have greatly increased, and you could begin your preparations for breaking through into the outer aura stage."

"One step at a time; stably and steadily. I believe you can do it."

Sikong Qing nodded, "I will work hard; thank you senior apprentice-brother Yan for worrying about me."

The two parted ways. Gazing at Sikong Qing's departing figure, Yan Zhaoge was silent for a long time.

Ah Hu came up to the front, giving a simple laugh, "Young Master, Miss Lin just departed, and you are already planning to eat up Miss Sikong? That's not very good..."

Yan Zhaoge said impatiently, "Can you not always be thinking about your lower half?"

Ah Hu scratched his head, "Why did Young Master look at that Miss with that kind of gaze then?"

Yan Zhaoge squinted his eyes, "Perhaps it was just me hallucinating, but having stepped into the Martial Scholar realm, Sikong Qing appears like she has undergone a complete renewal, some heaven-shaking, earth-overturning changes having happened to her body."

"While from a Martial Artist to a Martial Scholar there exists a heavenly gulf, and managing to cross it would mean a completely new world, the changes on Sikong Qing seem to be even greater than that, just that this feeling is still very indistinct."

Ah Hu gazed for a long time at Sikong Qing's figure which was almost already out of sight, before he said, puzzled, "Young

Master, other than having broken through to become a Martial Scholar, I just can't see what other changes she has on her."

Yan Zhaoge pursed his lips, "Perhaps."

"Right, earlier, I asked you to send people to follow that Zhao Hao. Do you have anything to report about that?"

Ah Hu replied, "He has made no movements for the time being, from the looks of it appearing far more law-abiding than all of you say."

Yan Zhaoge nodded, "Continue observing him closely, but don't come into contact with the people from the Eastern Tang."

Temporarily pushing everything else to the back of his head, after returning to his lodgings, Yan Zhaoge took out the Nine Treasures Ice Gourd that he had obtained from Elder Qin.

This object's original use was to store and preserve other items, especially some types of spirit grass as well as spirit medicines.

Once some spirit medicines were plucked, the spiritual qi within them would dissipate very quickly, rendering them useless. At such a time, having a Nine Treasures Ice Gourd would prevent one from encountering miserable failure.

After removing the stopper from the gourd, Yan Zhaoge retrieved the Profound Jade within which the Glacial Dragon Bone

Soul was sealed.

The power of the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul had already been partially absorbed by Yan Zhaoge. Now, Yan Zhaoge began absorbing its essence into his body once again.

Under the nourishment of the essence of the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul, Yan Zhaoge's cultivation base began rotating unceasingly as the essence was continually being transformed for his own use.

With the help of the Peerless Heavenly Scripture, Yan Zhaoge could achieve this grand feat that most Martial Scholars would find it hard to perform for real, thereby increasing his cultivation speed.

However, this time, while he was cultivating, Yan Zhaoge had one of his hands pressing down upon the Nine Treasures Ice Gourd.

The essence of the Glacial Dragon began circulating between the Profound Jade, the gourd and within Yan Zhaoge's body.

Gradually, the cold air around the Nine Treasures Ice Gourd grew thicker and thicker. From within the gourd, the roar of a dragon could also faintly be heard.

The figure of a white dragon now faintly appeared on the surface of the gourd.

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “Glacial Dragon’s Roar, complete.”

HSSB 71: Hidden Undercurrents Surging

In the following days, most of Yan Zhaoge's time was spent staying in Jingyang City.

Part of his time was spent working on his martial skills as well as improving his cultivation. Meanwhile, he also gathered the required materials and forged a new Internal Crystal Furnace.

The Internal Crystal Furnace having been successfully forged, Yan Zhaoge placed the seed of Li Yan True Fire within it, before beginning to test it out continuously.

Having gained the seed of Li Yan True Fire, the efficacy of the Internal Crystal Furnace increased as expected.

And having been nourished and cultivated by the Internal Crystal Furnace, the seed of Li Yan True Fire also gradually looked to be growing stronger.

Using the same technique, Yan Zhaoge used the aura-qi within his body to guide the flame essence held within the Li Yan True Fire seed into his body, to aid in his cultivation alongside the ice essence of the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul.

As time passed and the ice and the fire, intermingled, Yan Zhaoge's aura-qi began growing increasingly dense and refined at a swift rate as he progressed steadily towards the late outer aura stage.

Other than that, Yan Zhaoge would also make a trip to the Pill Pavilion whenever he had the time.

There, under his guidance, a batch of alchemists with the Eastern Tang's First Prince, Zhao Yuan, at their head, were constantly at work improving the Pill Pavilion's production methods.

The quality of Pill Pavilion products increased unceasingly, while the cost of their materials as well as their selling price remained basically unchanged.

Gradually, the Pill Pavilion was no longer being constrained within the Eastern Tang Kingdom. Rather, it was rapidly expanding towards the rest of the East Heaven Region as well as territories of the Fire and Mountain Domains which were situated nearby, growing more and more powerful by the day.

The Eastern Tang's Pill Pavilion was like a ferocious dragon crossing the seas as it began snatching up dominant positions in foreign markets, the channels of trade through which it profited growing more and more stable.

Its products being of the most superior quality yet still inexpensive, this quality to price ratio being something that would cause peoples' hair to stand on end, outside of the Eastern Tang, even if the local alchemist community wanted to join hands to suppress this foreign dragon, it still looked like it would be very tough indeed.

“Your vision must be precise, your control over your aura-qi stable.”

Within the Pill Pavilion, seated at the head of the table, Yan Zhaoge was saying, “At present, this technique can still only be used by Martial Scholars. Luckily, as the background of the Pill Pavilion runs deep, there shouldn’t be much of a problem.”

Mr Wang as well as Zhao Yuan both nodded.

Yan Zhaoge stood up, dusting off his clothes, “That’s all for today. I will still be remaining in the Eastern Tang for quite a period of time; if there is anything, we can talk about it next time.”

The people of the Pill Pavilion hurriedly rose together in a gesture of respect as Yan Zhaoge left the room.

Outside the Pill Pavilion, walking on the road, Ah Hu said quietly from behind Yan Zhaoge, “Young Master, there’s been word from Jade Sea City, expressing their thanks to you and Broad Creed Mountain for your reminder.”

Yan Zhaoge glanced back at him, “Oh, their Maiden of Extreme Yin really went to Hell?”

The Earth Domain was located in between the Fire and Water Domains, one west, one east.

As the Water Domain where Jade Sea City sat supreme was

connected to the Earth Domain, the Sacred Ground's martial practitioners were often moving about the outskirts of the Earth Domain.

Ah Hu answered, "It was during an investigative mission. She almost ended up accidentally entering the region where Miss Feng's Extreme Yin Physique was crippled."

"Having investigated afterwards, it was as if her group had been intentionally led there."

"Luckily, having reached the outskirts, Jade Sea City's clan headquarters received your, Young Master's, warning, in that grave instant where the horse was about to plunge off the cliff."

"While their Maiden of Extreme Yin did sustain some injuries, it was still nothing much, not to the extent of Miss Feng."

Ah Hu laughed, "Young Master, Jade Sea City really owes you a huge favour this time."

"As I see it, the person who led Jade Sea City's Maiden of Extreme Yin there was most likely of the Sacred Sun Clan."

Yan Zhaoge smacked his lips, "If the Sacred Sun Clan had been allowed just a little more time, they could have made much more thorough arrangements, completely putting Jade Sea City down without leaving any traces of their misdoings behind."

“I’m afraid that hearing that junior apprentice-sister Feng had been brought away by me, they had known that the information was going to be leaked. Therefore, they were forced to act beforehand, trying to seize a valuable chance during that brief window of opportunity.”

Ah Hu said, “Right, Young Master. I saw that Zhao Hao just now.”

As Yan Zhaoge had a share of the Pill Pavilion and Zhao Hao had just tried to tear down Yan Zhaoge and Zhao Yuan’s faces earlier, having returned to Jingyang City, Zhao Hao seldom came to the Pill Pavilion anymore.

Zhao Hao was also not that completely stupid-his cooperation with the Pill Pavilion with regard to the Smoke Cloud Powder did not break off.

Not only that; he also provided the Pill Pavilion with a new pill formula for a type of spirit medicine, working together on propagating it.

Over this period of time, Zhao Hao’s performance had been getting more and more outstanding, having already caused his position in the eyes of the people of the Eastern Tang Kingdom to rise.

No one would previously have thought that a black horse like that would actually suddenly domineeringly appear in the fight for the position of Crown Prince between the First Prince Zhao Yuan

and the Third Prince Zhao Sheng.

Zhao Hao's outstanding performance would inevitably draw many focused gazes.

According to what Yan Zhaoge knew, Yan Xu had previously met with Zhao Hao in private, but had achieved no progress with him, at least on the surface.

Whether it was Yan Zhaoge or Yan Xu, both of them were of Broad Creed Mountain, while it was obvious that Gao Zhe, the Pill Fire Divine Sword of before, and Zhao Hao, the Eastern Tang's current Sixteenth Prince, were hostile to Broad Creed Mountain from the start.

“Over this period of time, Zhao Hao has had contact with Infinite Boundless Mountain; they seem to be walking very closely together,” Ah Hu reported to Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge snapped his fingers, “As expected.”

As the Eastern Tang Kingdom lay within the territory of the Heaven Domain, Broad Creed Mountain naturally had the most control here.

Like a ferocious dragon crossing the seas, the Sacred Sun Clan's encroachment on the Eastern Tang was also very deep.

In comparison, the Sacred Ground who sat supreme over the

Mountain Domain, Infinite Boundless Mountain, was much more low-profile in the Eastern Tang. However, if one thought that Infinite Boundless Mountain was a benevolent entity, that might not actually be the case.

Like the Sacred Sun Clan, the Infinite Boundless Mountain was similarly encroaching on the Eastern Tang Kingdom, just that they lacked a good opportunity to do so more successfully.

And for Zhao Hao, while he would not choose Broad Creed Mountain, he also could not choose the Sacred Sun Clan, which already had Prince Jin, Zhao Shilie.

After all, Zhao Shilie was a Martial Grandmaster. While Zhao Hao displayed a shocking potential, it was still unknown when he could catch up to him.

Under such circumstances, it would naturally be impossible for the Sacred Sun Clan to forsake Zhao Shilie for him, Zhao Hao.

If he was willing to be Zhao Shilie's assistant, the Sacred Sun Clan would actually be willing. However, Zhao Hao was obviously unwilling to be under someone else.

What he wanted was the Eastern Tang throne, to have his words hold the greatest weight, taking much of the country's resources to aid him in his cultivation so that he would quickly reach his past peak once again, maybe even surpassing that.

Zhao Shicheng was already putting in effort in rearing him, but he obviously wanted much more.

Under such circumstances, Zhao Hao and Infinite Boundless Mountain naturally clicked instantly.

“His thoughts have already deviated from Uncle Zhao’s. Without us even having to say anything, Uncle Zhao will naturally handle it.”

Yan Zhaoge said mildly, “Even if Infinite Boundless Mountain wants to stand by the conflict between our Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan and reap some benefits from the side, it also won’t be that easy.”

“Continue watching closely. If there is anything, report it back quickly.”

Hearing his words, Ah Hu nodded, “Yes Young Master.”

.....

Within the Jin mansion, Zhao Shilie had a grave expression on his face as he looked at the golden-robed Elder before him, “So, it will be happening soon?”

The golden-robed Elder replied, “It might not be so soon. You just need to make your preparations and wait quietly for the time to come.”

Zhao Shilie asked, “The abnormalities in the Sealing Dragon Abyss are no trivial matter. Now that we are surer that they were artificially induced, if the matter truly has a connection with Hell...”

The golden-robed Elder said, “No matter; my Sacred Sun Clan has already especially dispatched experts to the outskirts of Hell to maintain surveillance over the area.”

“The East Rising Lord and I will be here as well, and will also be paying attention to the Sealing Dragon Abyss at all times. If a major incident really takes place, we will deal with it as necessary.”

“However, the good opportunity that the changes in the Sealing Dragon Abyss have created should also be grasped.”

The golden-robed Elder stood with his hands behind his back, “Crisis, crisis, how does one define crisis? Where danger and opportunity coexist—that is crisis. Only seeing the opportunity and diving in recklessly greedy for reward or only seeing the danger and standing there uselessly without moving forward; both are the actions of a fool.”

Zhao Shilie was also not a timid person who shrunk back from everything. Seeing that the Sacred Sun Clan had already set in place preparations with regard to the Sealing Dragon Abyss as well as Hell, he was relieved.

He fell silent for a moment, before asking, “Still, if we really

want to kill Yan Zhaoge...”

The golden-robed Elder said mildly, “Isn’t there still that Zhao Hao and Infinite Boundless Mountain?”

HSSB 72: Late Outer Aura Stage—Stepping Into The Air!

Because of the matter with Feng Yunsheng, the relationship between Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan had been very strained in recent days.

In the land of the Eastern Tang, the tension between the two sides completely came out into the open—sparks flew as the two sides clashed on all fronts constantly.

From the viewpoint of the outside world, if there hadn't been the unceasing abnormalities in the Sealing Dragon Abyss on the side, the two Sacred Grounds might already long since been at blows.

Having left Jingyang City, Elder Qin and the Sacred Sun Clan's East Rising Lord clashed once again in the vicinity of the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

The result was that neither side was able to do anything to the other, because their fight could have affected the nearby Sealing Dragon Abyss. Adding on the fact that the abnormalities there had intensified, the two sides finally decided to end things for now.

As the focal member that everyone was debating over, Yan Zhaoge had been extremely low-key these past few months, holing up at home and seldom coming out.

Still, the life that Yan Zhaoge passed was as fulfilling as before—

cultivating to improve himself, working on his alchemical skills, and performing Internal Crystal Furnace research.

Other than that, Yan Zhaoge also kept track of what he had asked Ah Hu to take note of earlier.

“Young Master, it is indeed as you expected,” Ah Hu said, standing before Yan Zhaoge. “Rumours have now begun spreading that Ye Jing and Miss Lin had still held feelings for each other. You were shocked and angered because of it and accidentally beat Miss Lin to death as a result.”

“Before this, what happened to Ye Jing in the Sealing Dragon Abyss was also because of you having secretly harmed him due to your burning jealousy.”

Ah Hu looked towards Yan Zhaoge. “Young Master, as you said earlier, does this mean that Ye Jing has fallen into Yan Xu’s hands?”

Sitting on his chair, Yan Zhaoge’s fingers gently rapped on the table surface as his eyes narrowed into slits. “The possibility of that is very high.”

“He definitely won’t let me have the chance to confront Ye Jing directly.” Yan Zhaoge propped up his leg. “I’m afraid that he really wants to kill me this time.”

From when the Sacred Sun Clan had come knocking up till now,

for a very long period of time, Yan Xu had been very well-behaved.

While he wouldn't go out of his way to be tolerant to Yan Zhaoge, he also wouldn't come finding trouble for him, appearing perfectly normal.

Some would think that this was because Elder Qin remained in the Eastern Tang, while others believed that it was because the pressure Elder Qin had previously placed on Yan Xu had deterred him sufficiently.

As Yan Zhaoge saw it, however, this was the calm before the storm.

What was coming were wild winds and violent storms that would be even more ferocious, like when a person's attack increases in ferocity upon retracting his fist to prepare for a next strike.

Ah Hu drew back the corners of his mouth. "He's waiting for a chance to fish in troubled waters, but there might not actually be such a chance."

Yan Zhaoge shook his head, "The Sacred Sun Clan has always been watching hungrily from the side, while Infinite Boundless Mountain is also watching us sneakily. What we see now is actually a very fragile peace."

"Everyone is just waiting for an opportunity."

After considering the matter for a bit, Yan Zhaoge turned his head to look at Ah Hu. “Elder Qin will be staying here at Overlooking Abyss City over this period of time?”

Ah Hu replied, “The abnormalities in the Sealing Dragon Abyss have been showing signs of intensifying. If nothing else especially big happens, Elder Qin will be remaining here.”

“The Sacred Sun Clan’s East Rising Lord is also nearby. However, he hasn’t come to find trouble again, probably because of his concerns regarding the Sealing Dragon Abyss.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded. “I will be going into seclusion for a period of time. Unless Elder Qin moves, do not disturb me.”

Ah Hu scratched his head. “What for, Young Master?”

Yan Zhaoge only smiled, not speaking.

The others were all a little surprised by Yan Zhaoge’s decision.

At first, they thought that Yan Zhaoge was intending to forge some artifacts with his Internal Crystal Furnace. Later, they guessed that he wanted to cultivate in some martial art.

But as time passed, they suddenly found that Yan Zhaoge’s seclusion had exceeded a dozen or so days.

“It can’t be that he is planning to break through into the late outer aura Martial Scholar realm?” Someone couldn’t help but guess.

As these words were spoken, everyone else was so shocked that they all jumped before shaking their heads. “How is that possible?! It was only half a year ago that he stepped into the mid outer aura Martial Scholar realm. How would it then be possible that...”

As they continued, they suddenly all fell silent.

They had suddenly realized that it was just like this that Yan Zhaoge had stepped into the mid outer aura Martial Scholar realm not even a month after he had reached the early outer aura stage.

Such a speed was already not something that terrifying would be enough to describe.

From that angle, taking half a year to go from the mid to the late outer aura stage, didn’t really seem like it would be that hard for people to accept?

...accept your mother, who would be able to accept it!

Everyone couldn’t help but want to break out into curses.

“Who knows what special means he used initially when breaking through from the early to the mid outer aura stage in order to hurriedly see short-term gains?” Someone said in a low tone, then

snorted.

After everyone had clearly seen who that person was, their expressions were all a little complicated.

It was the previous Acting Elder of the Spirit Wind Canyon, Wen Ningzhi.

Earlier, when the investigation had ended, Wen Ningzhi had finally still managed to pass through it by the skin of his teeth, only having been punished for neglecting his duties, but at least having finally been cleared of having consorted with the enemy.

However, while he was still an Assignment Hall Elder now, he didn't have an actual position to act in, thus being an idle person who just followed by the Eastern Tang Principal Elder Yan Xu's side, waiting for his orders.

The Acting Elder positions with actual power in the various lands were always occupied, without having any extra spots.

With Elder Qin there watching over them, Yan Xu also couldn't really make arrangements for Wen Ningzhi now. Therefore, Wen Ningzhi could only stay idle there.

It was even unclear whether he would still be able to continue staying on in the Eastern Tang after this.

Perhaps the faction of Yan Zhaoge's second apprentice-uncle

Fang Zhun, Yan Xu included, still trusted Wen Ningzhi, but he had inevitably been tagged with the ‘incompetent’ label.

The future ahead of him was totally dark.

Wen Ningzhi said in a heavy tone, “The Sacred Sun Clan has the method of sending the Divine Sun Needle into the body. While such techniques are few and far between within the Eight Extremities World, there are still a number of them.”

“Perhaps faced with the pressure of the late outer aura Martial Scholar Xiao Shen at that time, Yan Zhaoge chose to employ a method which would see him making quick but short-term gains, being like drinking poison to sate thirst. That would also be a very normal thing.”

“Just that like this, his future cultivation will definitely be affected as a result!”

“The heavens are balanced—how could all the good things be enjoyed by one person?”

Some people gazed at Wen Ningzhi mockingly, feeling that he probably loathed the sight of Yan Zhaoge because of what he had suffered at his hands before.

Many others, though, had the same thought well up within their minds.

Otherwise, only taking a month to break through from the early to the mid outer aura stage indicated a cultivation speed that would really be a piece of extremely shocking news which completely went against common sense.

And it was also not an ordinary person's common sense. Even in the world of geniuses, this was also an impossible feat.

Someone sighed lightly by the side, "Even if such is indeed the case, there was nothing that could have been done about it, right? Even having to face troubles later on, it would still be better than having been killed or wounded by Xiao Shen right on the spot."

Between his words, everyone's hearts suddenly moved.

Looking over, they saw someone walking in—that person was precisely Yan Zhaoge.

"What is everyone conversing about so happily?" Yan Zhaoge asked with a smile on his face.

Someone went up to meet him, "Zhaoge, you've left seclusion? It sure took you long enough..."

His words suddenly broke off mid-way, as though his voice had been cut in half by a pair of scissors.

Some others looked over and were also immediately frozen, their mouths unconsciously gaping wide and their eyes staring till they

turned round.

Wen Ningzhi frowned. Looking over from the back row, he only felt that Yan Zhaoge's height seemed to be somewhat higher than before.

After struggling his way through the stunned, dazed crowd, making it to the front row, and clearly seeing what was going on, he nearly lost it and fainted right on the spot.

Yan Zhaoge's height had not actually increased. It was only that he was currently suspended in the air, with more than a foot between his feet and the ground.

“Having broken through successfully, I naturally left seclusion,” Yan Zhaoge said carelessly as he walked towards the crowd.

The distance of a foot was naturally not Yan Zhaoge's hovering limit. However, in this type of occasion, it was already enough.

If his body could hover temporarily within the air, he would also be able to keep himself moving continuously airborne with the help of his qi.

This was precisely the trademark of a late outer aura Martial Scholar!

HSSB 73: The Time To Shine Has Come Once Again

While Yan Zhaoge appeared completely ordinary on the outside, his body currently contained an explosive power.

Within each of the acupoints on his body, there seemed to be coiling an ice dragon as well as a fire dragon.

Fire and ice intersected like yin and yang, complementing each other and benefiting from each other's strengths as each cycle passed.

In the time it took to lift a hand or raise a leg, it was like there were innumerable ice and fire dragons moving about impatiently together.

Having reached the front of the crowd, Yan Zhaoge finally landed on the ground, bowing in greeting.

Only now did everyone finally recover from their dazed, stunned state, though the way they looked at Yan Zhaoge now was, understandably, extremely weird.

He had taken a month before achieving his breakthrough from the early to the mid outer aura stage, then spent half a year before once again breaking through into the late outer aura stage.

At first glance, the speed of the latter seemed to have decreased.

But everyone present knew that the former required achieving a certain epiphany and level of understanding before one could break through the bottleneck and form weapons with their qi, whereas the latter required lots of pure, grinding effort, accumulating and refining one's aura-qi to a certain point before the breakthrough could be successful.

From a certain perspective, what was needed was just a lot of time.

However, in such a time-consuming process, Yan Zhaoge had actually also surpassed people by so, so much, having completed it in a far shorter time.

“How exactly did he manage it?” Everyone could only feel dizzy as their heads spun, “Could it still be said that there was a shortcut for this?”

Like the Sacred Sun Clan's Divine Sun Needle technique, as long as it was a technique that helped one to progress using such unnatural ways, it would generally be followed by some severe side-effects. Oftentimes, the cost would be greater than the benefits. Unless there was no other choice, no one would choose to utilise such methods.

Also, such methods could not be used more than once. After having been used the first time, the side-effects it would leave behind would eliminate the possibility of using it ever again.

Therefore, the way everyone was looking at Yan Zhaoge now was like how they would look at a monster.

Yan Zhaoge pretended not to notice this. Taking to the air and levitating had been to show off his new cultivation base. Now that this goal had already been achieved, he no longer had to express anything about it in words.

What words could he say?

Just take a glance and figure it out for yourself.

“En, it should be just like this.” Yan Zhaoge was very satisfied with the effect, thus completely not mentioning the topic that the crowd had been discussing previously, instead asking like nothing had happened, “Everyone gathering here—could it be that something major has happened?”

The others awakened one by one, one of them answering, “The black fog within the Sealing Dragon Abyss has been rapidly expanding once again, even more densely than before. Even ordinary Martial Scholars are finding it hard to approach.”

“With the abnormalities in the Sealing Dragon Abyss having intensified, Elder Qin, Elder Yan and the others are preparing to venture deep into the Sealing Dragon Abyss and suppress the black fog, as well as investigate the situation.”

The scale of the abnormalities this time was something that had never been seen before.

But to Broad Creed Mountain, the Sacred Sun Clan as well as the Eastern Tang Kingdom, it was also a good chance to settle the problem for good.

If they only treated the symptoms rather than the root, it would turn into a long-term problem, involving even more of their attention in the future.

Before this, the few powers had always been observing from the side, just waiting for the problem of the Sealing Dragon Abyss to completely erupt out for good before moving once to see where the cause of the symptoms lay, thus resolving the situation.

At the same time, the root of the problem should lie in Hell.

Yan Zhaoge nodded. He had exited seclusion at just the right time.

Not speaking unnecessarily, Yan Zhaoge and the others went together to meet Elder Qin as well as the other high-level experts of Broad Creed Mountain.

Other than Elder Qin and Yan Xu, Broad Creed Mountain also had a longtime Elder who had hurried over to the East Heaven Region to help keep an eye on the Sacred Sun Clan. He was likewise a longtime Martial Grandmaster, possessing strong

ability.

Seeing Yan Zhaoge, Elder Qin said, “This time, you shouldn’t enter the Sealing Dragon Abyss along with this old man and the others.”

“In such a critical period, it’s very hard to say what actions the Sacred Sun Clan will take. Our clan places caution as a priority—we cannot afford to not stand vigilant against them.”

Yan Zhaoge answered, “I understand.”

That Elder who had just arrived from Broad Creed Mountain remained outside to hold down the formation as well as look after Yan Zhaoge, also monitoring the Sacred Sun Clan’s movements in the meantime.

Yan Xu, being naturally familiar with the situation as the Principal Elder of the Eastern Tang, was also left to assist with the situation outside.

Elder Qin and the others were thus set to venture into the depths of the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

From the Eastern Tang, their King, Zhao Shicheng, would also venture there personally.

Although, as king, he shouldn’t take the risk himself and stand at the frontlines like a simple foot soldier, he was duty-bound to

participate as he was the only one who could activate the power of Jingyang City's grand formation from a long distance away.

The lands of the Eastern Tang were firmly connected with the Sealing Dragon Abyss. As Jingyang City was the central area where all of the power of the Eastern Tang Kingdom's earth veins congregated, it would be of great help to the expedition.

In order to prepare for the worst, the group of Broad Creed Mountain experts led by Elder Qin would travel alongside Zhao Shicheng and the other Eastern Tang Kingdom martial practitioners.

Meanwhile, the Sacred Sun Clan also transmitted over the news that due to the fact that Hell along with the Sealing Dragon Abyss was a major, pressing issue, a group of their experts led by the East Rising Lord would also be venturing into the depths of the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

Infinite Boundless Mountain similarly sent news that they would not ignore this matter.

As the news was sent over, the Eastern Tang Kingdom citizens who were hovering on the brink of danger yet having a limited knowledge of the true situation naturally all rejoiced and danced in celebration.

At this moment, on the surface, the three Sacred Grounds looked like they had reached a common agreement and forgotten what had happened in the past between them.

But the inside story was something only that those involved would themselves know.

Standing on the ramparts of Overlooking Abyss City, gazing far away, Yan Zhaoge could see the contours of the Luliao Mountains. At the same time, in another direction but still close to them, he saw an area with a thick black fog rising into the heavens.

Half of the entire sky appeared to have been enveloped by it.

Standing by Yan Zhaoge's side, Ah Hu's expression was more grave than usual. "If the aura cannot be externalised, it would even be impossible to go near its outskirts."

Yan Zhaoge stroked his chin. "The crucial point actually lies with Hell. The various Sacred Grounds have already dispatched some peak experts over to investigate, with the lineup being even more terrifying over on this side. From our clan, my father headed out personally."

Ah Hu stroked his chin as well in a copycat manner. "With the Family Head moving personally, there shouldn't be any problems, right? The other Sacred Grounds probably also sent over their top bigwigs."

Yan Zhaoge looked around his surroundings. "It's with me that there might easily be problems."

“I have now become professional bait, specially used to get people on the hook.”

“Earlier, it was the Crimson Spirit Flag Master. Now, it is the Sacred Sun Clan’s people.”

Ah Hu frowned, “Young Master, there have been no news of the Crimson Spirit Flag Master for such a long time. It can’t be that he will also come over to fish in troubled waters this time?”

Yan Zhaoge shook his head, “To him, the water here is already too troubled to fish in. With three Sacred Grounds staring at this region of the Eastern Tang, it would be completely impossible for him to sneak himself in.”

“As soon as he appeared, he would die immediately.”

“Although Elder Qin has entered the Sealing Dragon Abyss, Elder Kong is waiting outside specifically for the people of the Sacred Sun Clan.”

Ah Hu gave a simple laugh. “Young Master, your time to shine has come once again.”

“Get lost!” Yan Zhaoge scolded laughingly, “In your eyes, do I only ever rely on this kind of method to shine?”

After having finished laughing, Yan Zhaoge asked, “Back to serious matters—has the news been sent out yet?”

Ah Hu also stopped laughing and replied with a serious expression, “It was sent out as soon as Elder Qin and the others entered the Sealing Dragon Abyss.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, then looked towards the distance as he muttered to himself, “If he wants to move, it should be with this wave. What I am interested in is—how does Yan Xu intend to deal with me?”

As time passed, the faraway black fog roiled, its momentum seemingly growing to the point of wanting to surge into the heavens.

Who knows how long after, the black fog suddenly shook vigorously, before a bright, dazzling light rose up from within it, charging straight up towards the horizon!

Everyone from Overlooking Abyss City who had been paying close attention to the situation all let out a sigh of relief.

Although the situation was unclear, the momentum of the black fog was obviously gradually getting under control.

But Yan Zhaoge very quickly received yet another piece of news.

Upon receiving this piece of news, his good mood that had been borne from the situation within the Sealing Dragon Abyss falling under control, completely vanished.

“The King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Zhao Shicheng, met with danger in the Sealing Dragon Abyss!”

HSSB 74: The Sacred Sun Clan's Scheme

“In having met with danger in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, Elder Qin had been acting together with Uncle Zhao for the express purpose of guarding against the Sacred Sun Clan's East Rising Lord and the others.”

Yan Zhaoge sucked in a deep breath, looking at the black-bearded middle-aged man before him.

This black-bearded middle aged man was Elder Kong, who had come over from Broad Creed Mountain to assist Elder Qin in the East Heaven Region.

Elder Kong had a refined air about him. Dressed in a long gown, he resembled an ordinary middle-aged scholar.

Having already become familiar with him back at the clan, Yan Zhaoge knew that this Elder always liked to leave a bit of room for himself in his words.

In saying that Zhao Shicheng had met with danger in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, the actual situation would probably be even worse.

Looking at Yan Zhaoge, Elder Kong said simply, “Elder Qin and the others are still suppressing the abnormalities within the Sealing Dragon Abyss, thus requiring me to go rescue King Zhao and get him out.”

“That way, I will no longer be able to stay outside and look after you. Are you willing to enter the Sealing Dragon Abyss along with me?”

Yan Zhaoge did not hesitate, promptly answering, “I am willing.”

Elder Kong nodded. Not wasting any time on words, they moved out immediately.

On their way there, Yan Zhaoge finally came to hear the whole story about what was happening now.

While the abnormalities in the Sealing Dragon Abyss had not yet been completely quelled, there would also no longer be any major changes there.

According to Elder Kong, the source of the large scale abnormalities this time actually lay in Hell.

After Yan Di and the other experts took care of the problem there, the changes to the Sealing Dragon Abyss would naturally dissipate into the wind.

Earlier, the Ghost Hatchet Elder Han Sheng and some others had left behind a seed in the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

When massive upheaval occurred over in Hell as planned, it would induce a chain reaction in the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

Han Sheng's misdoings having been exposed earlier than planned because of Yan Zhaoge, they had already been partially taken care of.

Today, they would be completely eliminated by the root.

However, in this process, a problem had cropped up.

Zhao Shicheng had drawn upon the power of Jingyang City's grand formation to assist Elder Qin as well as the people from the Sacred Sun Clan and Infinite Boundless Mountain in suppressing the abnormalities in the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

In the midst of this, the formation being unstable, under the assault of the Sealing Dragon Abyss, there was a backlash, the power of the formation flowing in reverse and numerous chaotic streams of baleful qi rushing into Zhao Shicheng's body.

The power of the Sealing Dragon Abyss saw this as a gap in their defences, thus counterattacking with all its might, all of its pressure virtually falling on Zhao Shicheng himself.

While Elder Qin and the others managed to suppress this chaotic power in time, Zhao Shicheng still suffered some grave injuries as a result.

What was even harder to deal with was that many chaotic streams of baleful qi entered Zhao Shicheng's body in the form of a

black fog, causing him to lapse into unconsciousness, his body also becoming hard to shift as a result.

The chaotic streams of baleful qi were like a chain, forcibly dragging Zhao Shicheng deeper into the abyss.

The accompanying group of Eastern Tang Kingdom martial practitioners could only barely ensure that Zhao Shicheng was not swallowed up by the abyss, not being able to escort him safely out of the Sealing Dragon Abyss to seek treatment.

In entering the Sealing Dragon Abyss, Elder Kong's goal was to first break off the attack of the chaotic streams of baleful qi on Zhao Shicheng's body, then bring him out of that dangerous place before continuing in his attempts to salvage the situation.

But halfway to the Sealing Dragon Abyss, Yan Zhaoge and Elder Kong could no longer proceed.

Before them appeared a white-clothed woman, a golden damask wrapped around her waist, the air that she exuded shocking the surrounding black fog to roil away from her body in all directions, not daring to draw near.

Looking at Elder Kong and Yan Zhaoge, she smiled coldly, "The situation in the Sealing Dragon Abyss has already calmed down. It should also be time to properly settle things between us."

"Does your Broad Creed Mountain think that my Sacred Sun

Clan is so easy to bully?”

Elder Kong frowned, “It was the lot of you who did some tampering, causing an accident to happen with the Eastern Tang’s formation.”

Wagging her fingers, the beautiful woman raised her eyebrows, “Such words cannot be spoken lightly; the abnormalities in the Sealing Dragon Abyss and the abnormalities in Hell by connection are a major issue that concerns the entire Eight Extremities World.”

“Everyone worked together in suppressing it; my Sacred Sun Clan is no exception. Why then would we drag back your feet from behind?”

“As for the King of the Eastern Tang, it can only be said that his luck was bad.”

A coldness gradually surfaced within her eyes, “Of course, a greater possibility is that in not knowing where the trend of the world lies and standing as an enemy of my Sacred Sun Clan, he suffered divine punishment from that heavens. That might be it.”

Elder Kong’s features were as sunken as water. He recognised this woman-she was an important Elder of the Sacred Sun Clan.

Although she was not one of the Seven Reigning Suns, her cultivation attainments were not inferior to the East Rising Lord’s.

While Elder Kong was not afraid of her, since she had launched an attack here to hinder his movements, if he wanted to continue moving forward, it would be very difficult indeed.

Every second that was delayed was every second that Zhao Shicheng fell into further danger.

Looking at the current situation, it seemed like the Sacred Sun Clan had long been planning for this. It didn't even have to be asked for it to be known that Elder Qin was currently also being pinned down by the East Rising Lord for sure.

Yet the greater concern was the fact that having been rendered unconscious by the earlier turn of events, even whether Zhao Shicheng could make it out of the Sealing Dragon Abyss alive was an unknown.

That Prince Jin, Zhao Shilie outside...

Whether it was Elder Qin or Elder Kong, as long as one of them was outside, Zhao Shilie wouldn't dare to make such a bold move so easily in the least.

But if it was only Yan Xu...if Zhao Shilie replaced Zhao Shicheng as the one who controlled the grand formation, he would be very hard to deal with.

"Elder Kong, I'll go find Uncle Zhao," Yan Zhaoge said in a low voice.

As Elder Kong turned back to glance at him, Yan Zhaoge nodded in confirmation, “I’m going.”

Elder Kong knit his brows slightly, but time waits for no man. After considering slightly for a while, he could only nod his head in agreement.

He quickly told Yan Zhaoge the position of the Eastern Tang group, before adding, “Remember to be careful yourself as well.”

Yan Zhaoge having consecutively created many miracles, Elder Kong at least had a certain level of confidence in him.

Not wasting time, Yan Zhaoge immediately brought Ah Hu along as he continued forward.

The woman wanted to block them, but was herself obstructed by Elder Kong.

Her willow-shaped eyebrows rose as she laughed coldly, “That should be Yan Di’s son, huh? Being able to defeat the late outer aura stage Xiao Shen while himself only in the mid outer aura stage-what a rare feat indeed. However, do not forget.”

“A genius who dies young, is nothing at all.”

Elder Kong said in a light tone, “Anyone who dies is but a heap of

yellow soil. Martial Scholars; Martial Grandmasters-it is all the same.”

Saying thus, his palms brushed past each other as he unleashed Broad Creed Mountain’s direct lineage martial art, the Golden Curtain Palm of the Eight Extreme Arts, towards the enemy.

His opponent similarly displayed one of the Sacred Sun Clan’s peak martial arts to meet his attack.

The fight that erupted between two longtime Martial Grandmasters caused the entire Sealing Abyss to quake to the point that it looked extremely unstable.

Walking in a canyon within the abyss, Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu could feel obvious tremors coming not just from behind them but also from other directions.

Evidently, with the clash between Elder Qin and the East Rising Lord as their head, the experts from Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan who had entered the Sealing Dragon Abyss had engaged in a large-scale battle.

With the root of the problem having been eliminated over in Hell, the abnormalities in the Sealing Dragon Abyss had been quelled. Finally free of concerns, the two sides no longer held themselves back as all hell broke loose.

Traversing the Sealing Dragon Abyss, Yan Zhaoge could only feel

that the entire world was spinning, around them seeming as though it might collapse at any moment.

Ah Hu was also treading step by cautious step as he followed closely by Yan Zhaoge's side, "Young Master, this is the other side wanting to resolve the problem through its root ah."

"Having eaten a disadvantage previously in Jingyang City, they want to climb back up from whenever they fell."

Yan Zhaoge laughed coldly, "Their appetite is huge indeed; their goal is not only killing or maiming me, or perhaps tearing down our clan's face as revenge for junior apprentice-sister Feng's matter."

"They want the Eastern Tang, wresting over a stronghold in the East Heaven Region and permanently taking a step into the Heaven Domain from there."

Yan Zhaoge let out a relaxed breath, "As the head of a kingdom, in putting himself at risk in coming here this time, Uncle Zhao would definitely have paid much heed to his own safety."

"Elder Qin specially moving together with him this time was precisely to prevent the Sacred Sun Clan from exacting vengeance on him."

"But looking at it now, it was not the East Rising Lord's group who did something-Jingyang City's grand formation was what

went wrong.”

“Being a benevolent ruler, Uncle Zhao’s rule was rather more relaxed. The Sacred Sun Clan’s encroachment into the Eastern Tang runs deeper than what our clan knows of.”

“As long as it is planning and preparations, as time goes by and they become even more thorough and detailed, it would conversely be easier for some traces to be left behind and thereby detected by an opponent.”

“If the Sacred Sun Clan had continued with their preparations just like that, our clan would actually have found it easier to guard against.”

“However, the abnormalities in the Sealing Dragon Abyss this time coincidentally helped to supplement the areas in which they were previously lacking, causing them to act ahead of time and make their move.”

His gaze distant, Yan Zhaoge said, “And it isn’t only the Sacred Sun Clan; I’m afraid that Infinite Boundless Mountain will want to stick its nose into this matter as well.”

HSSB 75: One Thing Leads To Another!

Within the Sealing Dragon Abyss, a group of black-clothed people stood silently, watching the canyon before them which looked as though it might collapse completely at any moment.

Standing there, they resembled a whole chain of mountains: brooding, unyielding, dangerous.

All of them were martial practitioners of Infinite Boundless Mountain.

Infinite Boundless Mountain-the hegemon of the Mountain Domain, one of this world's Sacred Grounds alongside Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan.

Beside this group of Infinite Boundless Mountain martial practitioners stood a youth, his fangs shining through, wild and untameable.

He was, shockingly, the Sixteenth Prince of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Zhao Hao.

“With the abnormalities within the Sealing Dragon Abyss already having been suppressed, the black fog calming down a great deal, even Martial Artists can now enter. Otherwise, it would have required some more effort on my part.”

Zhao Hao looked at the Infinite Boundless Mountain martial

practitioner beside him, “Elder He, can you determine my father’s position?”

The leading Infinite Boundless Mountain martial practitioner was a decrepit-looking old man.

However, as he stood there, he resembled an enormous mountain, standing erect in the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

The old man said mildly, “As long as the medicinal powder you have provided does not go wrong, it can be determined.”

Zhao Hao nodded, “Then time is of the essence; let us depart quickly.”

“I am currently only a Martial Artist, and thus cannot defeat Zhao Shilie in Jingyang City.”

“However, with Royal Father in hand, there will be a chance.”

Elder He said, “It will all depend on how well you can do. In order to allow Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan to begin warring without reservation, our clan’s First Seat Elders did not enter the Eastern Tang. However, preparations have already been completed.”

“So long as you succeed, our clan’s assistance will immediately follow, entering the Eastern Tang to assist you in ascending the throne.”

“Even if the case of failure, it’s still fine; you can just follow us back to the Mountain Domain.”

“With your talent as well as methods, you are qualified enough to enter my Infinite Boundless Mountain.”

Zhao Hao strode forward, “I will not fail.”

“Waking up with a killing sword in hand; falling asleep drunk on a beauty’s lap-that is living.”

“Elder Yan, looks like the other party’s goal isn’t Yan Zhaoge but the entire Eastern Tang, ” A martial practitioner said worriedly.

Yan Xu’s expression did not change, “Our first priority is to proceed to the Eastern Tang royal palace, to ensure that Jingyang City’s grand formation does not fall into chaos.”

Whatever plans he had made in private, Yan Xu also didn’t want to see the Sacred Sun Clan gain control of the Eastern Tang, pushing his own Broad Creed Mountain out.

While arranging for the movements of the martial practitioners under him, he asked, “Yan Zhaoge has entered the Sealing Dragon Abyss?”

His subordinate answered, “Yes, he’s entered it alongside Elder

Kong.”

“Now that the situation in the Sealing Dragon Abyss is so chaotic, ordinary people don’t even dare to draw near to its outskirts.”

“I’m afraid that Elder Qin, Elder Kong and the others might be in an intense fight against the people of the Sacred Sun Clan at this very moment.”

Yan Xu nodded, thinking, “The Sacred Sun Clan wants to get take care of the Eastern Tang as well as Yan Zhaoge at the same time.”

“With Elder Qin and Elder Kong being pinned down by Sacred Sun Clan experts including the East Rising Lord, the Sacred Sun Clan still has other people present.”

Yan Xu’s gaze was cold and gloomy, “The Eastern Tang will never fall to you. As for Yan Zhaoge though...”

He summoned his most trusted subordinates over, laying down the instructions, “Pay close attention to the situation over in the Sealing Dragon Abyss.”

Eastern Tang royal capital, Jingyang City.

Zhao Shilie stood within the front courtyard of his Jin Mansion. Behind him, not betraying the slightest trace of their presence, stood a group of martial practitioners, all of them brimming with

spirit as well as energy.

A Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioner looked at Zhao Shilie from beside him as he slowly said, “Your Highness Jin, be decisive ah.”

Zhao Shilie sucked in deep breath.

The King, Zhao Shicheng, had recently been completely leaning towards Broad Creed Mountain, the situation gradually coming out into the open.

This way, his, Zhao Shilie’s position, had become incomparably awkward.

He was a Martial Grandmaster, one of the three Martial Grandmaster experts of the Eastern Tang royal family.

In consideration of the overall level of power of the Eastern Tang, whether it was Zhao Shicheng or Zhao Shicheng’s successor, none of them would move him easily.

However, if the contradictions between Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan grew more and more intense, in consideration of the peace of the Eastern Tang, his, Zhao Shilie’s position might no longer be safe.

Zhao Shilie understood his Royal Brother, Zhao Shicheng, well. He was a man who did not lack the ability to make prompt,

decisive decisions at critical moments.

Therefore, he himself also had to make a prompt decision.

“The core of the formation lies within the grounds of the royal palace,” Zhao Shicheng promptly strode out.

As they did not have the ability to defeat Broad Creed Mountain decisively within a short period, even if the Sacred Sun Clan wrested control of the Eastern Tang now, they would still have to face Broad Creed Mountain’s retaliatory actions.

The Eastern Tang Kingdom was destined to become the core region which both sides fought to and fro over.

Rather than sitting there waiting for death, with his situation becoming more and more precarious, he might as well go all out in resistance.

At the end of the day, Zhao Shilie was not happy always being placed lower than his brother.

Of the three Martial Grandmasters experts of the Eastern Tang, other than their King Zhao Shicheng and Prince Jin Zhao Shilie, there was also a Prince who was even more senior than them.

This old man, who was of one mind with Zhao Shicheng, was currently in charge of watching over the core of the formation.

The abnormalities in the formation having caused Zhao Shicheng to be injured and then trapped was something that he already knew of, a piece of top secret information which he had brooded over.

But when the old Prince saw Zhao Shilie appear, his worst predictions were immediately proven to be true, “Shilie.”

“Royal Uncle, I will be offending you,” After their encounter, Zhao Shilie didn’t waste any time on words, immediately making his move.

The old Prince sighed, before moving to block Zhao Shilie.

The martial practitioners under them also broke into a melee.

From the view of the outside world, Jingyang City’s grand formation being shaken also had the feeling of being buffeted by the wind and the rain.

In the Sealing Dragon Abyss with its diffused black fog, within the depths of the canyon, was a mass of light which enveloped a distance of a thousand feet all around.

Within the area that the light enveloped, there were rows of radiant spirit patterns flickering about on the ground.

The spirit patterns intersected and crossed, outlining a gigantic formation array that resembled the Eastern Tang's Jingyang City grand formation, only that its scale was a lot smaller.

Outside of the area that the formation enveloped, it was a tempestuous scene inside of the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

The remnant shockwaves from the clash between the martial practitioners of the two Sacred Grounds made the formation look like it was ready to collapse at any moment.

In the core area where all the spirit patterns intersected, the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Zhao Shilie, lay unconscious.

From his body extended a massive pillar of black qi, within which there was a red glow flickering.

The black qi extended far away, clashing with the formation, its other end extending far into the abyss beneath.

It was like a ferocious black python, biting onto Zhao Shicheng's body.

The group of Eastern Tang martial practitioners by Zhao Shicheng's side crowded by him, on one hand barely sustaining the formation, on the other trying to cut off the black qi, in their attempt to rescuing their liege from this perilous situation.

Now, the formation seemed as though it had been stirred up by

something, the rows of spirit patterns distorting violently.

Affected by the formation, the body of the unconscious Zhao Shicheng suddenly shuddered.

A line of jet-black blood trickled out from the corner of his mouth.

“Your Majesty!” Everyone was shocked.

Avoiding the massive stones above his head that frequently fell, Yan Zhaoge broke through the black qi, before finally nearing the formation.

The first thing he saw was the formation shuddering, and Zhao Shicheng vomiting out blood.

Yan Zhaoge knit his brows, “As expected, something’s gone wrong over at Jingyang City.”

Seeing that people from Broad Creed Mountain had come over to assist, the Eastern Tang martial practitioners were momentarily overjoyed.

But when they saw that it was only Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu, their faces instantly filled with disappointment.

If they wanted to break off the black qi pillar, a Martial

Grandmaster would be needed.

From outside the formation, the battling Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners now also discovered that someone was nearing Zhao Shicheng's group.

At this moment, the black fog suddenly cleared as a golden light flickered. It was like a sun had descended upon the infinite abyss, completely illuminating the surrounding darkness.

A terrifying golden light fell directly towards Yan Zhaoge.

HSSB 76: Enemies Approaching The City Gates!

The terrifying golden sword-light, resembling a huge sun tilted towards the west, hacked down directly towards Yan Zhaoge's head.

However, another terrifying sword-qi that seemed as though it could chop through anything caused the surrounding wind and clouds to surge as it chopped up diagonally, blocking that golden sword-light.

Not looking up at all, Yan Zhaoge entered the guardian formation, directly rushing towards the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Zhao Shicheng.

The Heaven-Thwarting Mantra which had been lost in the Eight Extremities World following the Great Calamity was now displayed by him.

The Vortex Reversal Technique was rotated at its maximum, the dragon-like aura-qi within his body surging.

This time, it was not guiding the black, foglike chaotic streams of baleful qi into his body like in his cultivation session before.

Instead, it was completely utilised outside of his body as Yan Zhaoge hacked out with his palm, looking as though he was wielding a large blade as he chopped towards that black qi pillar

that was drawing Zhao Shicheng towards it.

As it landed, the black qi pillar instantly began distorting violently.

It was like it was a huge snake which possessed true life; having been injured by a sword blow, it thrashed its thick body about in pain.

Where the blow had landed, the black qi pillar had obviously thinned out, as though a sizeable wound had been inflicted on it.

“How did he do that?” The Eastern Tang Kingdom martial practitioners looked like they had all just seen a ghost.

Yan Zhaoge did not have time to waste on pleasantries. Using his palm as a blade, he landed a few consecutive palms on the same position.

The black qi pillar shuddered violently before finally breaking apart with a loud boom.

A portion of it was swiftly retracted into the abyss, while some of it was infused into Zhao Shicheng's body.

Zhao Shicheng's body shuddered once again, blood once again trickling from the corner of his mouth. However, without the pull of the black qi, they could now finally take him out of Sealing Dragon Abyss.

While the Eastern Tang Kingdom martial practitioners were shocked by Yan Zhaoge's performance, they knew that now was not the time for unnecessary words. They hurriedly protected Zhao Shicheng as they began retreating from the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

The tempest above him was much more intense. The Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners began trying to break through and head downwards, while the Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners counterattacked unceasingly.

The East Rising Lord's moves became wilder and more unrestrained.

With a few West-tilting Heaven Incinerating Blades, it was as though the entire Sealing Dragon Abyss was going to be destroyed all at once, leaving everyone buried.

The Elder Qin whose personality was like a raging fire was, conversely, calm and composed at this time, not aiming for merit but at least not trying to make a mistake.

He carefully received the East Rising Lord's every move, ensuring that Yan Zhaoge, Zhao Shicheng and the rest would have the time to retreat.

Yan Zhaoge accompanied the Eastern Tang martial practitioners in escorting Zhao Shicheng out of this place.

The current situation was still rather disadvantageous for himself and for Broad Creed Mountain, with Zhao Shicheng having been heavily injured. Even if he could be saved from the Sealing Dragon Abyss, it was still unknown whether he would be able to deal with such a massive turn of events.

“There’s something wrong; what kind of smell is this?”

As he walked, Yan Zhaoge suddenly frowned. He came up to Zhao Shicheng’s side, giving a careful sniff.

“The pollen of the Hundred Spirit Ghost Grass,” Yan Zhaoge rolled his eyes, “Usually colourless and odourless, only emitting such a smell when in contact with the Sealing Dragon Abyss’s chaotic streams of baleful qi.”

The Eastern Tang martial practitioners beside Yan Zhaoge looked at him quizzically.

Yan Zhaoge pinched the corner of his forehead, “As expected, Infinite Boundless Mountain has stuck its nose in.”

The Eastern Tang had alchemy as its tradition; the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Zhao Shicheng himself was one of the top three alchemists in the lands of the Eastern Tang.

Even he had not noticed any abnormalities on himself; it was therefore only natural that the other Eastern Tang martial

practitioners were unaware of it as well.

In the dao of alchemy, amongst the Sacred Grounds, Infinite Boundless Mountain leaned towards the weaker side; the Hundred Spirit Ghost Grass had also never been produced in the Mountain Domain before.

“Zhao Hao,” Yan Zhaoge narrowed his eyes.

Such an unorthodox medicinal knowledge, in the lands of the Eastern Tang, should only be known by one other person other than himself, and that was Zhao Hao.

With Zhao Hao’s current cultivation, he naturally couldn’t smell it from a long distance away.

However, he could instruct Martial Grandmaster experts of Infinite Boundless Mountain to track Zhao Shicheng through that smell.

If the other side really was led by a Martial Grandmaster, their speed would definitely be higher than that of his own party.

In the situation where their movements were exposed, pure running would not be able to let them get away.

“Ah Hu, catch a fast-moving demonic beast here; I want a live one,” Yan Zhaoge commanded.

Not asking for the reason, Ah Hu immediately executed what was asked of him.

Not having the time to care about whether or not he was being rude, Yan Zhaoge directly stripped off Zhao Shicheng's outer robe and tied it on the demonic beast's body, before letting it run free.

"We cannot stop; continue moving forward," Yan Zhaoge said, "Even without his outer robe, Uncle Zhao still has the fragrance of the pollen of the Hundred Spirit Ghost Grass on him."

"As soon as we stop, we will be exposed."

The party continued on their way, but the quaking within the Sealing Dragon Abyss at this moment was becoming more and more pronounced by the second, as though the very heavens were collapsing and the very earth splitting apart.

"His Majesty's condition is getting worse and worse," As they walked, an Eastern Tang martial practitioner said in a grave tone.

Yan Zhaoge knit his brows slightly. Going up to check, he saw that Zhao Shicheng's face had turned black, a green qi and a red qi repeatedly flashing.

While he was currently unconscious, his body's Profound Art was rotating on its own as it withstood the invading baleful qi.

Both sides clashed unceasingly, affected by the quaking in the outside world, to the point where it seemed like he was in danger of undergoing cultivation deviation.

At this time, continuing to bring him forward would conversely be speeding him towards his death.

Even though the Eastern Tang Kingdom had a Xiantian Martial Scholar expert here, standing guard over their liege with their aura-qi, it would be hard to ensure his safety-the situation before them in the Sealing Dragon Abyss seemed like a scene from the end of the world.

Yan Zhaoge sucked in a deep breath, “Since he can’t continue moving, let’s just compete with the other side in the area of buying time.”

“Put down Uncle Zhao; I will assist him in recovering.”

Because of Yan Zhaoge’s repeated miraculous performances earlier as well as the Yan Family’s close relationship with Zhao Shicheng, faced with this situation, the Eastern Tang Kingdom martial practitioners chose to believe in Yan Zhaoge.

The Xiantian Martial Scholar expert immediately came forward to help.

Yan Zhaoge placed one of his palms on Zhao Shicheng’s chest and the other on his back, as he began circulating the Heaven-

Thwarting Mantra, assisting Zhao Shicheng in guiding and expelling the chaotic streams of baleful qi within his body.

Ah Hu and the others guarded closely by Yan Zhaoge's and Zhao Shicheng's sides.

At this moment, his entire face filled with earnestness, the gaze with which Ah Hu looked at Yan Zhaoge and Zhao Shicheng faintly contained a sense of worry.

Luckily, as time passed, Zhao Shicheng's condition gradually stabilised. Seeing this, everyone's faces filled with joy.

However, the formation with Zhao Shicheng sustaining it as its core was becoming more and more unstable by the second.

Obviously, the situation over at Jingyang City was not something to be optimistic about.

Now, Ah Hu and the others frowned simultaneously, as the faraway black fog parted and a group of martial practitioners appeared.

The people who had come were garbed fully in black, precisely the appearance of Infinite Boundless Mountain martial practitioners.

Leading them was actually a Xiantian Martial Scholar. Beside him stood a youth, none other than Zhao Hao himself.

Glancing at Yan Zhaoge and Zhao Shicheng, Zhao Hao's gaze was distant and deep, "You were able to detect the Hundred Spirit Ghost Grass pollen?"

"Luckily, upon getting close enough, even a Xiantian Martial Scholar will be able to barely discern its smell. Otherwise, we would really have fallen for your 'Cicada Casting Off Skin' trick."

That Infinite Boundless Mountain Xiantian Martial Scholar said mildly, "Currently, King Zhao is not merely lightly injured; his body has been invaded by the Sealing Dragon Abyss's baleful qi."

"If the treatment is wrong, it would instead be putting his life at risk."

"In this kind of situation, it would be better for Martial Scholars not to make a move. Our clan's Martial Grandmaster, Elder He, will be arriving at any moment. Him helping to treat King Zhao's injuries-that is the way it should naturally be."

He took a stride forward, "Saving a life is like extinguishing a fire; the earlier the better, and best not delayed. Just directly hand the person over to us."

Zhao Hao did not look at Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu, instead staring at the other Eastern Tang Kingdom martial practitioners, "If the time for treatment is delayed, Royal Father's life might be lost."

“This responsibility-which of you can bear it?”

HSSB 77: I'm Happy, What Do You Care?

Faced with Zhao Hao, the leading Eastern Tang martial practitioner did not shrink back.

“Sixteenth Prince, if this lowly subject does not remember wrongly, Your Majesty has ordered that you remain guarding Jingyang City. If no royal decree is given, you are not to leave.”

“Now, however, why have you appeared here?”

Hearing his words, Zhao Hao was not angered, as he just said mildly, “Naturally, it’s because I was worried about Royal Father’s condition.”

“I am proficient in medicine and alchemy; you should be aware of this as well.”

That Eastern Tang Kingdom faced him head-on, “So you dared to risk universal condemnation and leave behind medicinal powder on His Majesty’s body in order to track him?”

His hands behind his back, Zhao Hao’s expression did not change, “Do not speak nonsense; I only recognised the smell of the Hundred Spirit Ghost Grass pollen, and do not know how it came to appear on Royal Father’s body.”

“However, now does not seem to be the time to be quibbling over such inconsequential matters.”

He glanced at Yan Zhaoge and Zhao Shicheng, “Saving Royal Father’s life is the most important thing, as you should well know. It cannot be delayed.”

The Infinite Boundless Mountain martial practitioner beside him said in a deep tone, “We will be offending you.”

Saying thus, the group of Infinite Boundless Mountain martial practitioners rushed up towards the group from the Eastern Tang.

Infinite Boundless Mountain had strength in its numerical advantage, and its martial practitioners were also superior whilst at the same cultivation level.

Even with the formation guarding them, the Eastern Tang’s side felt extremely pressured.

With Zhao Shicheng unconscious, chaos having erupted back in Jingyang City and the black fog invading outside the Sealing Dragon Abyss, the formation guarding them had already become somewhat weak.

The two Infinite Boundless Mountain Xiantian Martial Scholars went on ahead to keep the formation at bay, while the other Infinite Boundless Mountain martial practitioners began jostling into the formation.

The Xiantian Martial Scholar of the Eastern Tang had originally

been assisting Yan Zhaoge in treating Zhao Shicheng.

As this moment, seeing the situation, he could only stop temporarily, getting ready to stand up and face the enemy.

But before he could move, two sounds of ‘Peng’, ‘Peng’ landed by his ear.

A large man stood in front of the group, directly flinging two Infinite Boundless Mountain martial practitioners, one in each hand, away from them.

Ah Hu stood there, looking as though nothing had happened.

He looked at the other side’s people, grinning, “With my Young Master here, your presence is not required. Please return.”

Seeing Ah Hu make his move, an Infinite Boundless Mountain Xiantian Martial Scholar’s gaze turned severe.

He strode forward, pushing out with his palm. Where his aura-qi touched, its density weighed down heavily like an entire mountain range.

With that, it was as though the scenery before everyone’s eyes had completely changed.

They were no longer in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, but within a

mountain range of lofty, majestic peaks.

As though they were being pushed by someone, the surrounding mountains began pressuring down towards them simultaneously.

Aura-qi attaining life—it had not simply materialised as a weapon's fearsome edge, but, rather, transformed into an illusory heaven and earth to suppress the enemy.

It was a skill only possessed by those of the mid Xiantian Martial Scholar realm or higher.

Ah [Hu](#) grinned, his usually simple and honest smile now seeming ferocious and savage beyond compare.

Hu means tiger

A long howl resounded, causing the surrounding area to rumble, as though a massive prehistoric beast, brutal and ferocious, had just awoken from its slumber.

Dazed for a moment, the Infinite Boundless Mountain martial practitioners now saw a massive black tiger appear right before their very eyes.

The howl of the tiger caused the winds to surge, a violent hurricane spreading out in all directions.

The illusory heaven and earth and its towering mountains that

the aura-qi of that Infinite Boundless Mountain Xiantian Martial Scholar had transformed into was assaulted by the terrifying storm. The land quaked and the mountains shook, the surrounding rocks breaking apart.

Faced with a black nightmare of a hurricane, the mountain range of lofty, majestic peaks, collapsed.

The Infinite Boundless Mountain martial practitioner's face instantly turned black as a pot's bottom, as he cursed loudly, "Xiantian Martial Scholar!"

"You, a Xiantian Martial Scholar, being someone's servant and follower-are you not ashamed?"

Even the martial practitioners of the Eastern Tang stared at Ah Hu in shock, finding it extremely hard to get their minds around it.

The Martial Scholar realm consisted of the following stages: Inner aura, Outer aura, Xiantian, and finally, Heavenly Connection.

With Heavenly Connection Martial Scholars generally focused on making preparations for breaking through into the Martial Grandmaster realm, seldom making worldly appearances, Xiantian Martial Scholars could be considered to be at the peak of Martial Scholars.

In the Eastern Tang and the entire East Heaven Region, Xiantian

Martial Scholars were forces that could not be taken lightly.

In Sacred Grounds like Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan, their Assignment Hall Elders at most only had the cultivation base of Xiantian Martial Scholars, with most of them being in the outer aura Martial Scholar realm.

Within the lands of the Eastern Tang, the leaders of many medium and small sects as well as familial powers were but Xiantian Martial Scholars at the very most, with even more of them unable to reach that level.

In the Eastern Tang royal palace, a Xiantian Martial Scholar could already be granted the position of an honorary minister.

But right before their very eyes, there was a Xiantian Martial Scholar expert, one who was already at least in the mid Xiantian stage, following after Yan Zhaoge and serving him diligently all day long.

Not as an elite bodyguard, but as a follower who was often sent running around like an errand boy.

But it was just-they could not reconcile this fierce-looking large man before them with the image within their minds of the slick fellow with the big build who had always seemed so simple and honest before this as he followed behind Yan Zhaoge wherever he went.

The Infinite Boundless Mountain martial practitioner stared at Ah Hu, his face livid, “It would still be acceptable if you had become the servant of Yan Wudi himself. But even though he is Yan Wudi’s son, how can you bend your head and serve him so willingly?”

“Where is your dignity; where is your pride?”

Ah Hu pulled at his ears, extending his hands in mockery as he grinned, “I’m happy, what do you care?”

Infinite Boundless Mountain’s other leading Xiantian Martial Scholar, his face similarly sunken, now said, “I remember now.”

“There was a rumour in the past that Yan Di once went all out and spared no expense in rescuing an old servant of his, even offending the Heavenly Thunder Hall of the Thunder Domain in the process.”

“But it seemed like that old servant still died later on, and all Yan Di brought back was a child.”

Ah Hu stopped smiling, his expression turning solemn, “That was my grandfather; I, Huang Huting, was that very child.”

Zhao Hao said coldly, “Your grandfather was a servant, and to repay your debt of gratitude, you too became the Yan Family’s lifetime servant.”

“What a base, spineless person. You are not fit to call yourself a martial practitioner.”

Ah Hu chuckled, “A small fry like you still talking about being fit or unfit; I can clap you dead with a single hand.”

“If you ask me, you aren’t fit to talk to my Young Master; you aren’t even fit to talk to me.”

Zhao Hao stared, a cold light flashing within his eyes, but was faced with Ah Hu’s sudden wild howl.

Under the impact of that violent aura-qi, Zhao Hao instantly saw stars, blood trickling down from his mouth and nostrils.

However excellent his knowledge and however high his cultivation had been in the past, however strong the atmosphere he had within him and his unrivalled ability at his cultivation level, it could also not make up for the huge gulf in cultivation between them as he was directly suppressed by the difference in realms.

It was virtually ‘a scholar encountering a soldier, possessing logic but unable to get it across’.

It wasn’t just Zhao Hao; the other Infinite Boundless Mountain martial practitioners were also all rendered dizzy and dazed, the world spinning before their eyes.

The two Infinite Boundless Mountain Xiantian Martial Scholars shouted loudly in unison, before finally managing to make Ah Hu's howl sound less intense.

Their faces livid, no longer in the mood for words, they shot into the sky, attacking towards Ah Hu in unison.

Ah Hu chuckled coldly. Resembling a beast which swallowed all it saw without reservation, he separated his palms, preparing to withstand the two with his own power, with no intention of backing off in the slightest.

The Eastern Tang Kingdom martial practitioners wanted to go forward to help, but found that Ah Hu alone was more than enough, as he dealt with his opponents with relative ease.

“His opponents are not your typical martial practitioner; they are from Infinite Boundless Mountain, the Sacred Ground of the Mountain Domain ah.”

The Eastern Tang Kingdom martial practitioners were all wide-eyed and slack-jawed in shock, unconsciously swallowing their saliva as they found it a little difficult to accept the sight before their eyes.

It was even worse for those of Infinite Boundless Mountain, who were angered to the point of vomiting blood, “This is a servant for the Yan Family?!”

Just at this time, a terrifying atmosphere suddenly assailed.

Ah Hu's expression turned grave, while the Infinite Boundless Mountain martial practitioners were all filled with joy, "Elder He has arrived!"

A Martial Grandmaster's terrifying atmosphere that could not be falsified descended and engulfed the entire area in an instant.

HSSB 78: Don't Look Down On Librarians

The atmosphere of a Martial Grandmaster expert engulfed the surrounding area, agitating the wind and the clouds.

The hearts of the Eastern Tang martial practitioners all sunk down to the utmost depths. Even all of them combined would not be able to stand up to such an opponent.

The figure of Infinite Boundless Mountain's Elder He appeared, his gaze landing on Yan Zhao and Zhao Shicheng.

Just as he was about to open his mouth to speak, his expression suddenly changed slightly.

The King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Zhao Shicheng, who had originally been unconscious and dead to the world, actually suddenly opened his eyes at this very moment.

Their gazes clashed head-on within the air just like that.

Zhao Shicheng said mildly. "Elder He, coming over to visit personally-I have troubled you."

As he said this, he sat up, one hand clenching into a fist, the other slapping onto the ground beside him.

With the ground beneath him as their centre, the originally faint

and broken lines of spirit patterns suddenly lit up with a dazzling radiance, spreading to envelop the surrounding area.

The power of the formation increased tremendously at this moment, going from ailing and weak to strong and abundant.

A powerful force directly shocked the people from Infinite Boundless Mountain led by Elder He, causing them to consecutively take a few steps back in retreat as they were forced out of the formation.

“How is it possible that he managed to recover so quickly?” Elder He swivelled his head to look at the other Infinite Boundless Mountain martial practitioners.

The two leading Xiantian Martial Scholars shook their heads bitterly, their faces filled with utter incomprehension and disbelief.

They said softly, “When we caught up to them, his injuries were very grave. The only difference between him and a dead person was that he still barely breathed.”

“There is definitely no reason for him to have recovered in such a short time.”

“This is virtually seeing a ghost in broad daylight!”

Wiping the traces of blood from the corner of his mouth, Zhao

Hao stared at the Yan Zhaoge by Zhao Shicheng's side, his palms still pressed on Zhao Shicheng's chest and back.

“What a shocking speed; how in the world did he do it?!”

Zhao Hao gnashed his teeth, fresh blood leaking from the corner of his mouth once more.

He was proficient in alchemy and medicine, standing at the very peak of this world. Other than a very select few, there were no others who were qualified to be mentioned in the same breath as him.

But helping Zhao Shicheng to recover in such a short period of time, was not something that he would have been able to do!

He had seen how Zhao Shicheng had been initially, seen how grave his injuries were.

But now, Zhao Shicheng had actually managed to regain his consciousness, as well as reactivate the formation once again. This went completely against his predictions.

Zhao Hao sucked in a deep breath, “It is not just that Golden Needle Liberating Pill technique; he is extremely proficient in all aspects of alchemy and medicine as well!”

Elder He's gaze similarly landed on Yan Zhaoge, “The Broad Creed Young Master is not a dragon among men but a dragon

amongst dragons-the rumours were actually true?!”

Let alone having completely gone against the expectations of the people from Infinite Boundless Mountain, even the Eastern Tang Kingdom martial practitioners were all shocked and startled by what had just transpired.

A warning bell sounded in the hearts of some, “It shouldn’t be a technique that excites one’s potential, forcefully causing His Majesty to awaken now at the price of his injuries deteriorating afterwards, perhaps even leading to his eventual death?”

“Don’t tell me that it is the moment of clarity before his death, the remnant radiance of the setting sun?”

Detecting the worried and troubled gazes of those around him, Yan Zhaoge couldn’t help but roll his eyes.

“I say, you guys, don’t look down on librarians, that occupation ah.”

Zhao Shicheng nodded towards Yan Zhaoge, then directly stood up, “This King was temporarily afflicted with a minor ailment; it is already fine now.”

“Thank you Elder He for personally taking the trouble to rush here to visit me, but this Sealing Dragon Abyss is not a place suitable for conversing.”

“After we have departed, This King will throw up a banquet within the royal palace-we will attend Elder He and you others of Infinite Boundless Mountain with hospitality then.”

Elder He looked at Zhao Shicheng, frowning.

He did not believe that having suffered such grave injuries before, Zhao Shicheng had already completely recovered.

Still, he could not grasp for sure how much of his power Zhao Shicheng currently still possessed.

How much of the power of Jingyang City’s grand formation Zhao Shicheng could currently still draw on was also an unknown.

If Zhao Shicheng was at his peak state, assisted by the power of the grand formation, Elder He would not be his match.

Zhao Hao’s gaze moved between Yan Zhaoze and Zhao Shicheng repeatedly.

Zhao Shicheng, however, did not even glance at him once.

When Zhao Shicheng had assisted Broad Creed Mountain in repelling the Sacred Sun Clan in Jingyang City previously, Zhao Hao had completely lost all hope in him.

And with Zhao Hao having appeared at this place and time

accompanied by those of Infinite Boundless Mountain, Zhao Shicheng now lost all hope in Zhao Hao as well.

Zhao Shicheng looked at Elder He, saying calmly, “This is not the place for conversing; This King will first take his leave. Elder He, please leave as you will.”

Saying thus, he extended his palms forward before pushing down at the air beneath him.

The spirit patterns of the formation vibrated, currents of qi flowing and rising, swirling to envelop Yan Zhaoge, Ah Hu and the other Eastern Tang martial practitioners with Zhao Shicheng at their centre, before rising towards the entrance of the Sealing Dragon Abyss.

Elder He’s face was sunken-he was really not satisfied if he had to give up just like this.

Although he was no longer completely confident in his success, he did not hesitate and risk wasting any time, instead immediately moving to obstruct Yan Zhaoge, Zhao Shicheng and the others.

But at this time, an intense tremor suddenly emanated over from the distance.

A cold, majestic sword-qi was transmitted over, slicing through the very air itself as the canyon within the Sealing Dragon Abyss seemed about to completely break apart.

“It’s Broad Creed Mountain’s East Elder and the Sacred Sun Clan’s East Rising Lord; they are rushing over here!”

An imposing sword-qi broke through the sky, blocking the path of those from Infinite Boundless Mountain.

A golden sword-light lit up, clashing with that imposing sword-qi once more.

However, the chance for the group from Infinite Boundless Mountain to chase down and attack Yan Zhaoge and the others had already passed; it was already too late.

Elder He’s face dimmed, “We have missed the opportunity; the situation here on out is something that we have no confidence over.”

“Let’s go. Contact our clan’s Elder to determine whether we should retreat or proceed on.”

He looked towards Zhao Hao, “If you continue to remain in the Eastern Tang, it will be difficult for you to produce any results in the future.”

Zhao Hao fell into a deep silence.

Yan Zhaoge, Zhao Shicheng and the others had also felt Elder Qin

and the East Rising Lord approaching just now.

Not only that; Elder Kong and that female Martial Grandmaster expert of the Sacred Sun Clan had long since left the Sealing Dragon Abyss in the midst of their fight, causing the heavens to roil and the earth to overturn wherever they fought as they swept over a distance spanning several hundred kilometres long.

“Uncle, the chaotic streams of baleful qi within your body have not been completely expelled yet,” Yan Zhaoge looked at Zhao Shicheng as he continued, “How confident are you about the situation over at Jingyang City?”

His expression slightly pale, Zhao Shicheng concentrated on that faint connection for a while before slowly saying, “Shilie, has already invaded and entered the royal palace.”

“With the help of the Sacred Sun Clan’s people, Royal Uncle cannot withstand him; control over half of the grand formation has already been wrested over by him.”

“With This King currently not within the Royal Palace, regaining control of it would require quite a bit of effort.”

Zhao Shicheng hacked forward with his palm. The currents of qi swirled, bringing Yan Zhaoge and the others to land safely on the ground.

With the current worrying condition of his body, Zhao Shicheng

all the more had to conserve his energy for the battles that would ensue.

Luckily, all the cities within the lands of the Eastern Tang had [relay stations](#), so they didn't have to worry about their mode of transportation.

Horses, of course

“If we rush back to Jingyang now, we might not be able to make it in time, and Zhao Shilie's advantage will only grow,” Yan Zhaoge said, “Uncle, I actually have a plan; perhaps you could try it out.”

Zhao Shicheng turned to look at him, “Oh? What are your thoughts, Zhaoge?”

Yan Zhaoge said, “Our clan's Spirit Wind Canyon; not far from Overlooking Abyss City, while also quite close to the Sealing Dragon Abyss.”

“A certain amount of resources are stored there; we can attempt to set up a reversal formation.”

Zhao Shicheng's gaze lit up, “Reversal formations are not easy to set up. Saying this, Zhaoge, you must have a way of doing so?”

Yan Zhaoge said, “I have the plans for the formation in my hands; we can place our bet on it.”

“While I say that it is a bet, it still presents more hope than if we returned to Jingyang City.”

Zhao Shicheng was moved by his words, but he asked with a sound transmission, “If it’s the Spirit Wind Canyon, the Cloud-Veined Crystal quarry ...”

Yan Zhaoge similarly replied with a sound transmission, “The war has already begun. Elder Xu Chuan being a capable person, he should already have made the necessary arrangements. There is no need to worry about the secret being exposed.”

“While the people from Infinite Boundless Mountain were obstructed by Elder Qin, on the territory of the Mountain Domain just outside of the Eastern Tang, many troops are definitely stationed and awaiting orders, poised to strike.”

“The Sacred Sun Clan is also moving.”

“Meanwhile, Zhao Shilie’s incursion on Jingyang City is also blazing strong.”

“Currently, every single second—time is of the essence!”

HSSB 79: Enemies Pressuring The Border

Zhao Shicheng looked at Yan Zhaoge, “Could I take a look at your formation?”

Even before he finished his sentence, Yan Zhaoge was already pulling out a cloth scroll.

Where his aura-qi touched, the cloth scroll did not tear, but some marks were left behind. With a “Shua, shua” sound, a complicated looking formation schematic appeared in front of Zhao Shicheng.

Zhao Shicheng carefully examined the diagram, comparing it with the knowledge of formations that he already had. Immediately, a feeling of cheerfulness welled up within him.

“This method could work!” Zhao Shicheng exclaimed, “However, to set up this formation, it will still depend on whether or not the supplies are sufficient.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “We’ve stored some materials at the Spirit Wind Canyon. Even then, if there aren’t enough supplies, we can try to requisition some from the nearby Overlooking Abyss City.”

With respect to the necessary materials for setting up a large-scale formation, Spirit Wind Canyon would naturally lack them.

...Even supposing that there was no lack, in front of those of the Eastern Tang, they would have to lack those materials.

Without prior preparation, how could they possibly have the materials stored up? They would have had to been preparing for such a situation for quite some time, and who was to say that those preparations were only directed at the Sacred Sun Clan?

When all was said and done, this reversal formation had to power to shake the Jingyang Grand Formation.

Even if Zhao Shicheng did not hold any misgivings of this sort, it was inevitable that other strong cultivators from the Eastern Tang would have some uncertainties about the intentions of Broad Creed Mountain.

After settling on this plan, they all immediately set off for Spirit Wind Canyon. On their way there, they continuously received news regarding the progress of the battle.

In the Eastern Tang, apart from Jingyang City, most places had not yet fallen into disorder. However, all of the areas controlled by the Broad Creed Mountain had encountered the menace of the Sacred Sun Clan.

This was also true of Spirit Wind Canyon, which was already under siege from the outside.

Yan Zhaoge and the rest of the delegation quickly swept through all obstructions. Having already received news of their arrival, Xu Chuan hurriedly came out and ushered Yan Zhaoge and Zhao Shicheng into the city.

Currently, Xu Chuan had been reassigned as the Acting Elder of the Spirit Wind Canyon. Compared to its previous status, Spirit Wind Canyon had become vastly more important—meaning that its defenses had also increased correspondingly.

“Elder Xu, please prepare the items on the list that I gave you. Whatever is missing, list it out.” Yan Zhaoge immediately spoke with no time for pleasantries.

Xu Chuan was likewise aware of the urgency of this mission, and immediately received the list that Yan Zhaoge had prepared. He immediately dispatched people to gather all the available materials, and made a quick report of all the unavailable ones.

“Overlooking Abyss City has all of the things that we’re lacking,” Xu Chuan instantly said, “It is unknown whether our clan’s warehouses have fallen, but even if we can’t get them from there, other places in Overlooking Abyss City definitely have those things.”

“Whether it is the Sacred Sun Clan or Infinite Boundless Mountain—their warehouses are definitely not lacking!”

Yan Zhaoge took a look at the list that Xu Chuan had compiled, then turned to Ah Hu, “Ah Hu, the situation is urgent; you’ll have to make a trip. Be mindful of your safety.”

Zhao Shicheng and Yan Zhaoge had to remain in order to set up the formation, and amongst the others, Ah Hu was the strongest.

Ah Hu gave a simple and honest laugh, “Young master can be assured, I will be there and back before you know it.”

Having said that, he turned and left. As soon as he exited the Spirit Wind Canyon, he made a beeline for Overlooking Abyss City.

Zhao Shicheng looked in the direction in which Ah Hu had departed, “Even though Yan Di did not pass down the core learnings of Broad Creed Mountain to him, whether it is the Black Nightmare Godly Wind or the Ghost Tiger Divine Claw, both of them are peak martial arts.”

Yan Zhaoge’s expression became warm, “That year, my dad actually wanted to take in Ah Hu as a disciple, but it was Ah Hu himself who refused.”

“Therefore, my father took out the direct lineage martial arts of the late Wind Domain’s Sacred Ground that he had collected and passed them down to Ah Hu.”

In recent years, Yan Di had actually wanted to take Ah Hu as a disciple even more, and Yan Zhaoge’s body’s previous owner had also looked upon Ah Hu more as a friend than a servant.

After Yan Zhaoge arrived in this world, he had also viewed the big fellow in the same way. Most of the time, he did not even think of him as a servant.

The two of them often poked fun at each other, possessing a cheerful and relaxed relationship.

Compared to some people whose faces he had never seen and he had never spoken to, existing only in the memories of his body's original owner, Yan Zhaoge had a much deeper relationship with Ah Hu. As their friendship deepened, their relationship became closer to the relationship that had existed with his body's original owner.

If it wasn't for Ah Hu's cheeky style whereby he seemed to disregard social status, making it seem like he needed to be taught a lesson, he could basically be considered the first friend that Yan Zhaoge made since arriving at this world.

As he spoke with Zhao Shicheng, Yan Zhaoge began helping him as they assembled a brand new formation within the Spirit Wind Canyon.

From the looks of it, this formation somewhat resembled the Jingyang Grand Formation.

However, if one looked closely, the detailed markings in the formation seemed right but were actually wrong. Compared to the original grand formation in Jingyang City, it was as though everything had been reversed.

It was like everything had been reflected in a mirror.

The formation gradually took shape, already beginning to emit a brilliant light. The lines of spirit patterns lit up in all directions, covering all of Spirit Wind Canyon.

Zhao Shicheng sat in the centre of the formation, one hand clenched in a fist, while the other slapped at the ground.

As for the Jingyang Grand Formation which was also being controlled by him, the light emitted by that formation also began to grow more dazzling.

It was only that that light was constantly flickering, causing it to appear very unstable.

Yan Zhaoge knew that this was caused by Prince Jin, Zhao Shilie's, revolt in Jingyang City.

Zhao Shicheng's expression didn't change as he meditated serenely. He directed the power of the grand formation whilst simultaneously drawing on the power of the Spirit Wind Canyon reversal formation to find a counterbalance between the two powers.

His eyes flashed as his dragon robe began to emit a golden light.

Golden light like the scales of a dragon-it was as though an armor of dragonscales was protecting his body.

This was the Eastern Tang's number one treasure, the mid-grade

spirit artifact known as the Imperial Golden Dragonscale Armor.

Most of the time, it remained inconspicuous, contained within Zhao Shicheng's body. However, when the need arose, the armor would manifest itself and envelop his body.

Inside the Sealing Dragon Abyss, it was lucky that he had had the protection of this powerful mid-grade spirit artifact. Otherwise, with the sudden reversal of the grand formation and the recoil from the power of the Sealing Dragon Abyss's abnormalities, even whether or not he could have secured his very survival was an unknown thing.

Yan Zhaoge formed a sword with his left hand, whilst making a guiding motion with his right. A jade-colored green light shot towards the sky, then landed directly in front of Zhao Shicheng in the center of the formation.

This was Yan Zhaoge's personal spirit artifact, the Jade Dragon Sword.

Zhao Shicheng gently stroked the tip of the blade, as the roar of a dragon instantly resounded.

The Jade Dragon Sword hung in midair under the control of its consciousness.

On the sword's blade, there was a brilliance circulating as the faint shadow of a dragon appeared and began travelling around.

The faint shadow of a golden dragon also materialised above the Imperial Golden Dragonscale Armor that Zhao Shicheng was wearing, also roaring mightily.

The Imperial Golden Dragonscale Armor worked to control and direct the flow of power from the Jingyang Grand Formation while the Jade Dragon Sword helped to control the reversal formation.

The twin dragons dazzled with a brilliant light as the two formations harmonized, the power they emitted growing stronger and stronger.

Just at this time, the Broad Creed Mountain and Eastern Tang martial practitioners within the canyon all frowned slightly.

A strong atmosphere suddenly descended upon the Spirit Wind Canyon from outside it.

A wheel of golden light rose up at the mouth of the canyon as a frightening pressure began pressuring down towards the formation within.

“The Sacred Sun Clan! A Martial Grandmaster!”

Yan Zhaoge knit his brows. Though the cultivation of the attacking martial practitioner was inferior to those like Zhao Shicheng and Yan Xu, this was still a real Martial Grandmaster!

Zhao Shicheng's expression remained calm as he raised a fist and punched into the sky.

Backed up by the power of the formation, his strike shot towards the golden wheel of light in the sky.

The two powers made contact and burst apart in a brilliant explosion, making it hard for others to even look at it.

At the moment, Zhao Shicheng's injuries had still yet to mostly recover. What's more, the power of the grand formation was still being contested over in Jingyang City.

He was able to obstruct that Martial Grandmaster and prevent him from entering, but his attention as well as the power of the formation was also momentarily occupied by him.

Under the attack of the Sacred Sun Clan Martial Grandmaster, a rift suddenly formed in the formation's defenses.

Multiple figures rippled as a crowd of Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners rushed into the canyon.

Amongst those who rushed in, many possessed a frightening aura, seemingly causing the very space around them to roil wherever they went.

The people within the canyon felt their hearts sink, "So many Xiantian Martial Scholars!"

Yan Zhaoge fixed his gaze on one of the invaders who was dressed in a white robe, with a large beard and a gaze as venomous as a snake's. That person was precisely Xiao Shen.

Xiao Shen's gaze swept over the canyon as he entered, his attention instantly focusing upon Yan Zhaoge.

“Yan! Zhao! Ge!” Xiao Shen spit out each syllable as he stared at Yan Zhaoge with a burning gaze.

HSSB 80: The Battle Of Spirit Wind Canyon

Yan Zhaoge took a glance at Xiao Shen, then ignored him totally.

“Arriving earlier than expected-this is not just the Eastern Tang Kingdom’s problem...”

Yan Zhaoge’s eyes narrowed into slits, “Yan Xu...”

As the Sacred Sun Clan had many experts present, Yan Zhaoge wanted to assist Zhao Shicheng in sustaining the formation himself.

He immediately called loudly, “Elder Xu!”

“I understand,” Faced with serious business, Xu Chuan had completely discarded the usual flattery and slickness that he showed in private.

He led the Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners under him, surging forward to meet the invading Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners.

The Eastern Tang martial practitioners who had travelled alongside Yan Zhaoge and Zhao Shicheng also went with them.

The Sacred Sun Clan invaders consisted of a considerable number of elites, possessing many experts.

Because Cloud-Veined Crystals could be used to produce Jade Essence, while Broad Creed Mountain had kept from making any major, obvious movements in order to pull the wool over others' eyes, the Spirit Wind Canyon had become very strict internally, its defences having increased considerably in secret.

Otherwise, at this moment, they might have been broken through instantly by the Sacred Sun Clan.

Even so, with so many Martial Scholars experts of the Sacred Sun Clan attacking together, the pressure on the Spirit Wind Canyon had increased considerably.

Xu Chuan and the Xiantian Martial Scholar expert of the Eastern Tang went up together to block their path, obstructing the advance of most of their opponents.

The two sides were momentarily locked in a stalemate.

The Martial Grandmaster of the Sacred Sun Clan who had been prevented from entering the canyon attacked non-stop, sending attacks towards the Spirit Wind Canyon and Zhao Shicheng like an unending tide.

Yan Zhaoge and Zhao Shicheng both had stern expression on their faces.

As they dealt with this attack before their eyes, their side had

once again fallen at a disadvantage in the battle over at Jingyang City.

With two battles simultaneously ongoing, the pressure on Zhao Shicheng had increased considerably.

The reversal formation had yet to be fully set up. With Prince Jin, Zhao Shilie, continuously exerting pressure over at Jingyang City, the control over the Jingyang City grand formation was gradually falling into his hands.

As this situation persisted, over at the Spirit Wind Canyon, the power of the grand formation that Zhao Shicheng had agglomerated gradually began showing signs of deficiency.

The enemy Martial Grandmaster who was clashing with it was most sensitive to this change.

He led out a long howl, “Zhao Shicheng, you stubbornly insisted on being the enemy of my Sacred Sun Clan-this is how it’d end up!”

“You are too foolish, unable to clearly see where the trend of the times lies. Broad Creed Mountain has long since reached its sunset, whilst my Sacred Sun Clan is at its zenith!”

“Your brother, Zhao Shilie, is much smarter than you; in consideration for the Eastern Tang, the throne will be better sat by him instead!”

As he said this, he brought his palms together, before pushing them out forward in unison.

One of the Seven Great Sun Arts, the Heaven Striking Palm!

The sun hung high, in the middle of the sky!

Moving with a domineering attack renowned for its power, executing the wild and violent side of the Sacred Sun Clan's martial arts to the point of perfection!

Suppressing with its momentum, suppressing with its power.

The higher the cultivation of a martial practitioner, the better they were able to unleash the power of this martial art.

At this moment, utilising the Heaven Striking Palm, the Martial Grandmaster's attack was far more ferocious than that of the Martial Scholar Chan Yuanlong previously.

Everyone present could only feel that before their eyes was a resplendent golden sea, blazing violently.

The Martial Scholars all felt like their aura-qi had almost been ignited by this one palm, burning up and vaporizing!

Zhao Shicheng's expression was grave, his face having turned

slightly black.

A green qi and a red qi once again began flashing on his face.

The chaotic streams of baleful qi that had not been completely expelled from within his body had continuously been causing trouble for him all along.

At this moment, clashing with an opponent and facing pressure, their momentum also grew stronger and stronger.

He sucked in a deep breath, hitting out with his fist once more. The Imperial Golden Dragonscale Armor on him began to flicker with a glow, the roar of a dragon resounding.

That Sacred Sun Clan Martial Grandmaster let out a low shout, a purple-gold radiance lighting up on his right arm.

It was an armguard of pure gold, containing nine purple crystals which flickered as they shone with a brilliant light, its momentum rising up to the heavens.

It was, shockingly, yet another spirit artifact!

As the two sides collided, Zhao Shicheng's and his enemy's bodies both shook.

The formation shuddered once more as Zhao Shilie's advantage

over in Jingyang City grew.

The amount of the grand formation's power that Zhao Shicheng could draw on dropped once more.

Pressing on his advantage, the Sacred Sun Clan's Martial Grandmaster consecutively hit out with the Heaven Striking Palm, causing the surrounding space to rumble unceasingly as though it was about to collapse.

Under the brilliant glow of the massive sun, the radiance of the formation's spirit patterns dimmed.

Zhao Shicheng had no choice but to reduce the perimeter of his defences.

However, this way, the enemy's attacks began affecting the Spirit Wind Canyon's defences.

With the help of their Martial Grandmaster, the group of Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners closed in.

Xiao Shen's gaze was fixated on Yan Zhaoge from afar, as venomous as a snake.

The Xiantian Martial Scholar beside him formed a sword with his left hand, his right hand abruptly tapping on his scabbard behind him.

A sword-light lit up, penetrating through the horizons, resembling the morning sun rising eastwards into the sky as dawn broke.

One of the Seven Great Sun Arts, the Divine Sword of Dawn!

Low-grade spirit artifact, Flowing Fire Sword!

The sword-light shocked the heavens as the first light of dawn broke, with the sun beginning to rise eastwards, reaching its zenith within the sky before eventually tilting westwards and descending beyond the distant horizon. That single sword displayed sunrise to sunset; the beginning to the end.

Seeing this, Yan Zhaoge hacked out at the air with his palm, the Radiant Sun Wheel emerging!

Seeing the Radiant Sun Wheel, the Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners all faltered slightly, following which their attacks became even more ferocious.

Xiao Shen stared intensely at the Sacred Sun Wheel, his eyes seemingly about to pop out of their sockets.

Letting out a piercing, enraged howl, he abruptly raised his palm.

The light of a spirit diagram flickered on his palm, resembling a

crown formed of the sun.

The Radiant Sun Wheel within the air halted momentarily.

“Tsk! It is indeed like that...” Yan Zhaoge frowned, “A pity that I have to use my Jade Dragon Sword for the reversal formation. Otherwise, I could just switch artifacts and all would be fine.”

As the Radiant Sun Wheel halted in midair, that Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioner, wielding the Flowing Fire Sword, landed towards the Spirit Wind Canyon.

The defensive formation of the Spirit Wind Canyon, having been facing the pressure of a Martial Grandmaster all along, suffering this blow from the Flowing Fire Sword, finally had a rift formed within it!

The crowd of Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners immediately rushed in!

Xiao Shen swivelled his head to look at that Xiantian Martial Scholar, “Elder Liang, help me out!”

That Xiantian Martial Scholar nodded, once more striking out with a Divine Sword of Dawn.

The Flowing Fire Sword transformed into a red light, entangling with the Radiant Sun Wheel in mid-air.

Yan Zhaoge watched this scene coldly from the side, his figure already having arrived before Zhao Shicheng.

Grabbing hold of the Jade Dragon Sword, with the guidance of his fingers, the spirit patterns of the reversal formation flickered.

Zhao Shicheng's situation now became somewhat more stable.

Xiao Shen flew forward, once again extending his hands and grabbing towards the Radiant Sun Wheel. The Radiant Sun Wheel began vibrating intensely as the sun crown diagram on his palm also shone with a radiant light.

The Radiant Sun Wheel's shuddering gradually died down.

Xiao Shen shut his eyes; within the darkness, it was though sunlight had gradually appeared.

Feeling that he was currently re-establishing his connection with the Radiant Sun Wheel, regaining the spirit artifact that he had lost, Xiao Shen felt an incomparably comfortable sensation running throughout his entire body, as though all of the pores on his body had simultaneously been opened up.

He began cutting off Yan Zhaoge's connection to the Radiant Sun Wheel.

Opening his eyes, Xiao Shen's pupils flickered with a cold light as he stared at Yan Zhaoge, "Yan Zhaoge, you are a figure."

"However, the more outstanding you are, the greater the threat that you will pose to my Sacred Sun Clan in the future!"

"I have to admit that the humiliation you gave me is something that I am unable to wash clean now."

"However, rendering you dead-there are many people here who can do it!"

The crowd of Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners was locked in battle with Xu Chuan's group.

However, the Sacred Sun Clan had more experts on their side. Without the assistance of the Spirit Wind Canyon's formation, Xu Chuan and the others had fallen at a disadvantage.

The Sacred Sun Clan sent out a Xiantian Martial Scholar, heading straight towards Yan Zhaoge!

Yan Zhaoge looked straight at the oncoming enemy.

With every single stride that the other party took, the surrounding space as well as scenery seemed to tremble!

HSSB 81: Xiao Shen, Where're You Going?!

Yan Zhaoge looked at that Xiantian Martial Scholar of the Sacred Sun Clan, drawing closer and closer with every step.

Now, a voice suddenly roared from afar, before it neared.

The aura-qi surrounding Ah Hu surged, resembling a black hurricane as it blocked in front of Yan Zhaoge.

“Young Master, I’m back!” Saying thus, Ah Hu took off the sizeable luggage he was carrying on his back and promptly threw it down before Yan Zhaoge.

Then, with a single stride, he was in front of that martial practitioner of the Sacred Sun Clan.

Not saying a word, Ah Hu’s arms intercrossed as he shot out with his claws, a wild, violent black hurricane enveloping the area as it reached the heavens and covered the earth.

Letting out an enraged roar as well, that Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioner’s aura-qi turned into an illusory heaven and earth, illuminated by a massive, brilliant sun.

The golden sunlight and the black hurricane clashed together in that instant.

As he let loose a fierce laugh, Ah Hu's huge frame came to resemble the shadow of a ghost, forlorn and drifting unpredictably.

A ferocious black tiger lunged out of the black hurricane, raring to swallow whoever it saw!

Ah Hu's figure abruptly crouched, then leapt, already having ripped the massive golden sun apart as his claws grabbed towards his opponent's throat and heart!

Where the Ghost Tiger Divine Claw passed, the very air seemed to be torn and ripped apart like a piece of fabric!

The black hurricane transformed into the head of a ferocious tiger, opening its gaping maws wide as it prepared to swallow the enemy directly!

The expression on the face of the Xiantian Martial Scholar controlling the Flowing Fire Sword turned grave. He temporarily forsook the Radiant Sun Wheel, directing the Flowing Fire Sword to chop down towards Ah Hu.

A glow lit up on Ah Hu's body as a black armour of light materialised, blocking the blow of the Flowing Fire Sword.

With a roar, Ah Hu sent out a claw to block his opponent's Divine Sword of Dawn.

His first opponent hurriedly executed the Leap of the Rising Sun as he retreated, his entire body startled into a sweat!

The Flowing Fire Sword and Ah Hu's Black Nightmare Armour clashed, neither giving way. The Sacred Sun Clan's two great Xiantian Martial Scholars now shouted loudly in unison, following which a wind of aura-qi shocked the heavens, an illusory heaven and earth enveloping in all directions.

They say that there can never be two suns in the sky, but at this moment, two suns had appeared right before Ah Hu's eyes!

One of the suns was hanging high overhead, like the sun in the afternoon sky. The other emerged with the break of dawn, the first light of dawn appearing!

Ah Hu was not intimidated in the slightest. His entire body's aura-qi erupted as he leapt with his body, resembling the pouncing of a tiger.

Clouds obey dragons, wind obeys tigers!

As Ah Hu roared wildly, an all-enveloping black hurricane swept away everything in its path, sand flying and stones shooting, terrifying beyond compare!

Yan Zhaoge grabbed the luggage that Ah Hu had thrown over, from which he retrieved various rare and unique treasures.

Controlling his aura-qi, Yan Zhaoge waved his hand, various materials flying over to land within the reversal formation.

As Yan Zhaoge made continuous gestures with his fingers, the rows of spirit patterns within the reversal formation became more and more dazzling and eye-catching as its entire structure was finally completed.

Those of the Sacred Sun Clan also understood what a reversal formation entailed, but none of them could have predicted that this reversal formation would actually have been completed so quickly.

That Martial Grandmaster had all along been trying to break through Zhao Shicheng's line of defence and first destroy the reversal formation. However, having been obstructed doggedly by Zhao Shicheng, he had never had a chance to succeed.

At this moment, seeing that the reversal formation had been completely established, a bad feeling suddenly rose up within his heart.

“Tsk!”

With a low yell, Yan Zhaoge flung out his arm, the Jade Dragon Sword rising into the air.

Then, he extended his palms straight forward, before pressing down towards the air!

The reversal formation within the Spirit Wind Canyon having completely taken form, it began operating with a bang, merging into one with the grand formation Zhao Shicheng was controlling!

The spirit patterns of the grand formation suddenly shone with a strange, fierce red light!

As the red light flashed, within the royal palace in the faraway Jingyang City, the body of Zhao Shilie, also currently drawing on the power of the grand formation, shuddered intensely, as he directly spat out a mouthful of fresh blood!

Yan Zhaoge said urgently, “Uncle, now!”

Not saying a word, Zhao Shicheng, standing within the formation, directly made a stance with his fist.

As Yan Zhaoge looked at Zhao Shicheng, he could see that as the shadow above his head hovered, he could vaguely see a spirit tree swaying in the wind, towering mightily to the heavens.

The power of the Imperial Golden Dragonscale Armour was completely drawn upon by Zhao Shicheng. As he punched out with his fist, the power of the grand formation abruptly increased.

The Martial Grandmaster of the Sacred Sun Clan who had originally been holding the upper hand had a shocked expression on his face as he was instantly sent into retreat!

“Yan Zhaoge!” Xiao Shen and the others were all shocked, never having thought that even after their side had gained the upper hand, Yan Zhaoge’s side would actually still have the possibility of turning the tables around.

“Even if it is the reversal formation combining with the original grand formation, there also shouldn’t be such strong, instant results ah!”

Zhao Shicheng was heavily injured while Zhao Shilie currently occupied his Jingyang City.

In the end, however, in the fight for the control of the Jingyang Grand Formation, it had actually been Zhao Shicheng who made a turnaround victory!

A golden sabre-light lit up from afar.

Yet another Sacred Sun Clan Xiantian Martial Scholar defeated his opponent, following which he chopped down with a West-tilting Heaven Incinerating Blade directly towards Yan Zhaoge!

However, not waiting for him to draw near, Ah Hu released an angered roar, his left hand remaining in the Ghost Tiger Divine Claw whereas he retracted his right hand to form a fist!

This was actually a martial skill that Yan Zhaoge had passed down to Ah Hu in private!

Of the Six Spirits Demonic Fist, the Tiger Roar Demonic Fist!

Ah Hu turned completely berserk as he punched out with his fists and let fly with his claws, with his own power, actually holding down the three Sacred Sun Clan Xiantian Martial Scholars all at once!

The roar of a tiger resounded throughout the entire Spirit Wind Canyon. Seeing this, Xu Chuan and the others were all secretly shocked within their hearts.

Seeing the situation, Xiao Shen's face turned gloomy and vicious, as he no longer had the mind to continue collecting the Radiant Sun Wheel.

“A good dog does not block the dao!” Xiao Shen looked venomously at Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu, “Since you are protecting your owner so loyally, I'll slaughter you dog lackey along with him as well!”

Hearing Xiao Shen's dark tone, Yan Zhaoge fixated his gaze on him.

He saw Xiao Shen suddenly take out an object in the shape of a cylinder.

One end was held within his hands, while the other was aimed straight at Ah Hu!

Yan Zhaoge bellowed, “Ah Hu, evade it! It’s Sun Rain!”

Hearing his words, Ah Hu seemed to hesitate slightly.

However, his big frame still didn’t move to evade.

Yan Zhaoge frowned. If Ah Hu were to evade it, Xiao Shen’s Sun Rain would be aimed directly at himself, Yan Zhaoge.

Therefore, Ah Hu stayed where he was!

The next moment, the cylinder within Xiao Shen’s hand suddenly erupted with ten thousand streaks of golden light, incomparably piercing to the eye.

The glow of innumerable golden needles, resembling sunlight illuminating the heavens and the earth, also resembling a huge downpour of rain, so dense that not even a sliver of wind could slip past!

An incalculable amount of Divine Sun Needles transformed into streaks of light, shooting straight for Ah Hu!

Sun Rain, the Sacred Sun Clan’s direct lineage secret treasure hidden weapon, specialising in breaking through a Martial Scholar’s aura-qi!

Anyone below the level of a Martial Grandmaster, when facing this attack head-on, would be hard-pressed to get out of it easily!

Even the three Xiantian Martial Scholars of the Sacred Sun Clan hurriedly flashed to the side.

Ah Hu's gaze was as though it had been ignited, his aura-qi transforming into an illusory heaven and earth as he roared madly.

The black hurricane engulfed all directions with the momentum of a tiger crouching and a whale swallowing, the Black Nightmare Armour lighting up with a glow as Ah Hu focused all his efforts on defence.

Fine, piercing collisions resounded one after another non-stop, as Ah Hu's body was now dotted with thousands, ten of thousands of resplendent golden Divine Sun Needles!

On the other side, Zhao Shicheng lifted his head skywards and let out a long howl, his palms pushing forward.

The control of the grand formation had been fully wrested back by him.

While Zhao Shicheng himself was heavily injured, with the power of the grand formation to support him, his power instantly became extraordinary.

First, he drew on the formation, launching a counterattack on

Prince Jin, Zhao Shilie back over in the faraway Jingyang City who had still yet to recover his spirits, shocking him to the point that fresh blood spurted uncontrollably out of his mouth.

Then, he hit out at the air with his palm towards the Martial Grandmaster expert of the Sacred Sun Clan, causing him to spit out a mouthful of blood as he retreated.

As the perimeter of the grand formation expanded, the Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners were all forced into retreat.

Yan Zhaoge rushed out and supported Ah Hu, before handing him over to Xu Chuan and the others who came up after him.

Turning his head and gazing, Xiao Shen was also retreating in a hurry.

His voice like thunder, Yan Zhaoge boomed angrily, “Xiao Shen, where’re you going?!”

Yan Zhaoge’s figure leapt, as he instantly lunged to before where Xiao Shen was, like a fearsome tiger released from its cage!

Six Spirits Demonic Fist, Tiger Roar Demonic Fist!

HSSB 82: The Ferocious Yan Zhaoge!

Like a ferocious tiger, Yan Zhaoge roared as he landed bloodthirstily before Xiao Shen.

Xiao Shen retreated hurriedly, taking to the air as he wanted to increase the distance between them.

Taking a few consecutive steps forward, Yan Zhaoge also took flight, striding out as he stepped on the very air itself.

Within the acupoints of his entire body, the coiling ice and fire dragons let out a shocking roar in unison.

A fog of ice and the light of fire rose up from Yan Zhaoge's body, merging with his aura-qi, ice and fire intermingling as he resembled a deity.

The roar of a tiger with his fist, the roar of dragons in his qi!

The Divine Xuanwu of the North-the power of the Door of Blood erupted.

With that single fist, Yan Zhaoge directly broke through and collapsed Xiao Shen's defensive Sunset Thousand Illusory Palms.

Greatly shocked, Xiao Shen prepared to execute the Leap of the Rising Sun in order to evade him.

“Go!”

With a loud shout, Yan Zhaoge straightened his back abruptly, as for a moment it seemed like there was a divine dragon stretching its massive bulk.

This exertion of power had integrated the rising of clouds and the soaring of dragons of the Coiling Dragon Sleeve.

All the clouds and dragons within the surrounding ten thousand kilometres soared into the sky in that instant.

Just as Xiao Shen’s body was about to move, Yan Zhaoge arrived before him with a higher speed, lashing out domineeringly.

The fingers on his clenched fists unfurled, forming into hooks as each of his hands seized onto one of Xiao Shen’s arms.

The two figures halted simultaneously in mid-air.

Yan Zhaoge shot out one of his legs, directly kicking towards Xiao Shen’s chest.

At the same time, the power of the coiling ice and fire dragons roiled as they were exerted outwards from his hands.

A powerful force, forming the momentum of roiling mountains

and rivers, was exerted on Xiao Shen's arms.

While kicking Xiao Shen backwards, his hands were still gripping tightly onto Xiao Shen's arms, refusing to let go.

Kicking and pulling-the two diametrically opposing forces instantly distorted Xiao Shen's body till it resembled a tattered rag.

“Peng!”

A muffled noise resounded, blood and flesh spraying in all directions.

The entire sky where the two were in mid-air was filled with a rain of blood, exploding and descending on the surrounding area below.

With a low roar, Yan Zhaoge had actually forcibly ripped Xiao Shen's arms apart, all the way up to their shoulders where they were connected to his spine.

Xiao Shen let out a sharp, piercing wail, “Yan Zhaoge, you actually dare...”

Yan Zhaoge flung away Xiao Shen's broken arms, stepping on the air as he caught up with Xiao Shen who had finally been sent flying by the force of his kick, his hands reaching out once more.

“Someone who is going to die, shouldn’t speak so much rubbish.”

The surrounding Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners, having been repelled by Zhao Shicheng and the power of his grand formation, had not been in time to assist Xiao Shen. They now let out enraged roars in unison.

Xiao Shen’s eyes were almost popping out of their sockets, “Yan Zhaoge, don’t get too happy.”

“Even if you kill me, you are destined to go down with me.”

“I will be waiting for you below.”

Yan Zhaoge didn’t take any of this into his ears, shooting out with a claw and directly piercing straight through Xiao Shen’s chest.

His other hand, its fingers spread wide apart, filled up Xiao Shen’s vision as it clamped down on the top of his head.

Yan Zhaoge’s palm pressed down on Xiao Shen’s head as he laughed coldly, “Oh, I’m so scared.”

Saying thus, he abruptly tightened his fingers as he made an upward motion of his hand.

The violent power of his fleshly body, coupled with his powerful,

abundant aura-qi, erupted simultaneously.

A blood of rain once again erupted and descended as Yan Zhaoge wrenched at Xiao Shen's neck and took his really great big head off.

Xiao Shen remained staring wide-eyed, unable to rest in peace.

The entire Spirit Wind Canyon instantly fell silent.

Everyone stared dazedly at Yan Zhaoge, lifting Xiao Shen's head up high as he stood unyielding in midair.

“Yan Zhaoge!”

The next moment, the Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners simultaneously let out enraged roars.

With that Martial Grandmaster at their head, they all rushed towards Yan Zhaoge together.

Within the valley, Zhao Shicheng was calm and silent as he formed a fist with his left hand and a palm with his right, hitting forward simultaneously.

Golden dragons of light began rampaging between the heavens and the earth, their scales heaving and their roars shocking the heavens, as though real dragons had descended upon the world.

The Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners were sent into continuous retreat by the power of the grand formation as unleashed by Zhao Shicheng, unable to take even a step closer to the Spirit Wind Canyon.

Xu Chuan and the Martial Scholars of Broad Creed Mountain and the Eastern Tang Kingdom began moving from defence to attack.

“Retreat!” That Martial Grandmaster of the Sacred Sun Clan roared despondently, having no choice but to lead his fellow clan members into retreat.

Blood oozed from the corner of Zhao Shicheng’s mouth, green and red flickering intermittently on his face.

He retracted his palm, as the others also ceased in their pursuit of the enemy.

Carrying Xiao Shen’s head, Yan Zhaoge descended to the ground, turning and returning to Ah Hu’s side.

Ah Hu was sitting cross-legged on the ground, the radiance of the Black Nightmare Armour on his body having dimmed. On that black armour of light were densely dotted numerous golden needles.

All the golden needles had penetrated deeply into the armour.

Ah Hu had a rather sooty and defeated look on his face. Luckily, his accompanying spirit artifact, the Black Nightmare Armour, was also a defensive tool. Even when it could both attack and defend, its defensive power was still shocking.

Otherwise, when simultaneously engaged in battle with three Xiantian Martial Scholars earlier, having been sneak attacked by Xiao Shen's Sun Rain, he would have died for sure.

Even so, while the Black Nightmare Armour had been able to hold off the dense rain of Divine Sun Needles, Ah Hu had also been injured by the force of their qi penetrating his body.

Although the Divine Sun Needles themselves had not directly penetrated into his body, it was like Ah Hu had endured thousands, tens of thousands of heavy blows in that instant.

Yan Zhaoge came before Ah Hu, placing his palm on his back to assist him in adjusting his body's condition.

The others all now came to look at Yan Zhaoge with complicated expressions on their faces.

While Xiao Shen had also moved with the intention to kill, meaning that Yan Zhaoge had been totally justified in killing him, really seeing Yan Zhaoge kill Xiao Shen, all their spirits had wavered momentarily.

Especially with such a vicious and brutal method of killing.

Earlier, when Yan Zhaoge had clashed with Xiao Shen, however badly he had beaten him, it could still have been discounted as Xiao Shen having been the weaker side in their sparring match.

However, with both sides similarly being an elite of their respective clan's younger generation, seedlings with much potential on whom their clan devoted much effort to rear, deciding superiority with a spar and straight out killing the other party were two completely different concepts indeed.

Moreover, Xiao Shen's grandfather was one of the few ultra bigwigs of the Sacred Sun Clan.

As Xiao Shen had said, this having happened, the Sacred Sun Clan would definitely not let it go so easily.

This matter, as compared to taking in the other side's disciples who had betrayed their clan, was even greater.

But amidst their complicated feelings, the Broad Creed Mountain and Eastern Tang Kingdom martial practitioners also felt a strong sense of excitement.

In recent years, the Sacred Sun Clan had been pressuring them closely with every step, having already been arrogant and unbridled for very long.

Allowing you to move in for the kill, while not allowing my

Broad Creed Mountain to retaliate?

That wouldn't conform to logic at all.

At this moment, Yan Zhaoge had already regained his former calm.

The Jade Dragon Sword was still serving as the core of the reversal formation, working in synergy with Zhao Shicheng's grand formation.

With a wave of his hand, the Radiant Sun Wheel returned to Yan Zhaoge's hands once more.

Looking at the Radiant Sun Wheel, everyone was suddenly snapped out of their reverie.

"The Broad Creed Young Master killed Xiao Shen just now, in but a short instant."

While both of them were late outer aura Martial Scholars, Yan Zhaoge had directly crushed Xiao Shen till not even dregs were left of him.

An Eastern Tang martial practitioner swallowed his saliva, "Xiao Shen was definitely not someone ordinary outer aura Martial Scholars could compare to ah."

Of the Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners who had attacked this time, there were those who had a higher cultivation than him.

However, at the same cultivation level, no one could say for sure that they could defeat him.

“The World Illuminating Young Master of the Sacred Sun Clan is hailed as one of this generation’s Four Young Masters alongside Young Master Yan, while Xiao Shen and the World Illuminating Young Master are part of the Sacred Sun Clan’s Four Rising Suns, precisely the face of the Sacred Sun Clan’s younger generation.”

However, such a Heaven’s favoured son had been attacked and killed by Yan Zhaoge so easily.

“Xiao Shen was so easily defeated by Young Master Yan; for other people, would it also...”

Someone exclaimed in a low tone, “Yan Zhaoge is even stronger than rumoured ah!”

Earlier, rumour had it that Yan Zhaoge had surpassed levels to beat Xiao Shen while only in the mid outer aura Martial Scholar realm.

As none of them had witnessed it personally, they had still been a little sceptical about this.

But now, there was no question about it.

The handsome, graceful young master and the iron-willed, ferocious martial practitioner-both of these identities now perfectly reconciled within their minds.

HSSB 83: Plans Cannot Keep Up With Changes

Everyone's discussions were heard by Yan Zhaoge, but at this moment, he wasn't in the mood to boast of his success.

While helping Ah Hu to adjust his body's condition, a part of Yan Zhaoge's mind was still focused on the reversal formation.

At this moment, Zhao Shicheng's features had already returned to normal. With the power of the entire grand formation supporting him, it was much easier for him to recuperate from his injuries.

Seeing this, Yan Zhaoge also set his heart at ease.

Ah Hu's breathing recovered to normal as the Divine Sun Needles clattered to the ground all around him.

He opened his eyes, grimacing as he said, "Luckily, in coming out this time, I wore the spirit artifact bestowed to me by the Family Head. Otherwise, I would really have been finished."

Seeing that he was already fine, Yan Zhaoge laughed, "How was the taste of the Sun Rain?"

Ah Hu grinned, "Pretty vicious."

Yan Zhaoge retrieved a cylinder, precisely that very Sun Rain, “This thing is insidious. Although it will be a little troublesome having to refill it every time it is used, its power is indeed something.”

“You can take it out to play in the future; whoever you launch a sneak attack on, you can even let the Sacred Sun Clan take the blame for you.”

Hearing this, everyone didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

Ah Hu, however, accepted it over happily, “Young Master, this plan is good.”

“In the future, whoever Young Master doesn’t like the look of, I’ll give him a good one.”

Naturally, the two were only kidding.

Yan Zhaoge came before Zhao Shicheng.

From his appearance alone, there were already no abnormalities whatsoever on Zhao Shicheng, as if he had already made all but a complete recovery from his injuries.

Having helped to treat his injuries earlier, Yan Zhaoge had already imparted to him a portion of the Heaven-Thwarting Mantra.

At this moment, able to draw on the power of the grand formation, Zhao Shicheng's rate of recovery was naturally very quick. While he had still yet to fully recover, his earlier wounds already no longer hindered him.

Zhao Shicheng gazed at Yan Zhaoge, slowly nodding his head, "Zhaoge, it was all thanks to you this time; if not for you, I wouldn't have been able to wrest back control of the Jingyang Grand Formation so quickly."

Everyone was jolted by his words, as the gazes with which they looked at Yan Zhaoge were now filled with praise as well as marvel.

It was precisely Yan Zhaoge's methods which had allowed this situation to make a complete turnaround, almost to the point of bringing one back from the dead.

Not mentioning the fact that his personal strength as well as talent was far above the rest, he had also displayed an ability to turn the raging tides through his vigorous efforts. Really, they should no longer view this youth as a member of the younger generation who rose to prominence rather late.

Such methods, such personal value-how could they be something that an outer aura Martial Scholar could weigh?

Yan Zhaoge bowed towards Zhao Shicheng, "Uncle is erroneously praising me; it all still depended on Uncle's role as a central pillar

earlier.”

“This reversal formation is just something that I happened by by chance; while it might be useful now, it might not always be useful in the future.”

Zhao Shicheng said, “If you want to talk about central pillars, you should first look at your side’s Elder Qin, Elder Kong and them.”

“If their fight with the East Rising Lord is decided within a short period of time, the situation will still change greatly.”

Pondering deeply, Yan Zhaoge suppressed his voice with his aura-qi, sending over a sound transmission to Zhao Shicheng, “Uncle, I have a feeling that something is wrong, that we have to leave this Spirit Wind Canyon as soon as possible.”

Zhao Shicheng’s gaze flickered slightly.

Yan Zhaoge said in a low tone, “The attitude that Xiao Shen had on before he died did not seem like he was blustering and making empty claims, or perhaps cursing me due to his anger. It seemed like he was truly completely sure that I would follow in his footsteps very quickly.”

“This makes me very concerned. I know that having just gotten back control of the grand formation, you still need some time to stabilise it. However, I’m afraid that we’ll have to leave this place

first.”

Ah Hu had also only just gotten back his breath, the extent of his injuries still unknown. However, Yan Zhaoge also did not leave any time for him; they could only see about that after they had left.

Zhao Shicheng glanced at Yan Zhaoge, not asking any questions as he directly agreed, “Alright, let’s leave first.”

While the Eastern Tang Kingdom martial practitioners were worried about Zhao Shicheng’s condition, they also hoped that he would quickly return to Jingyang City to oversee its affairs, where it would be convenient to cleanse the kingdom of Prince Jin, Zhao Shilie and his group of insurgents.

On the other hand, it was also in Jingyang City that Zhao Shicheng could completely unleash the power of the grand formation at its maximum level.

Moreover, the movements of Infinite Boundless Mountain were still unclear.

Though, most likely, there was probably a Martial Grandmaster expert stronger than that Elder He lying in wait somewhere within the lands of the Eastern Tang.

Not wasting any time caring about rest, they departed immediately.

As they were walking, Yan Zhaoge looked towards Xu Chuan, sending him a sound transmission, “Elder Xu, those in the valley who know about the secret of the Cloud-Veined Crystals...”

Xu Chuan smiled, “Young Master Yan, you can rest easy. Before you lot arrived here, I already sent them collectively away, finding a safe place to settle them down.”

As long as the secret was not exposed, even if the enemy let out their frustrations on the Spirit Wind Canyon, destroying its various installations, the quarry that was located deep underground could still be re-opened and mined in the future.

Yan Zhaoge nodded. Xu Chuan was an extremely alert person, also possessing a strong decision-making ability. Helping him up previously had indeed been a right choice.

If Xu Chuan’s cultivation could reach an even higher level, his father could indeed devote some effort to grooming him, helping him to walk up to even great heights.

Yan Zhaoge instructed, “While we have already retreated, closely keep an eye on the movements within the Spirit Wind Canyon.”

While Xu Chuan found this a little weird, he still went to pass down these instructions.

Having heard Yan Zhaoge’s words, Zhao Shicheng asked him through a sound transmission, “You are worried that there are

even stronger experts of the Sacred Sun Clan nearby. But if there were such people present earlier, why did they not make a move?”

Yan Zhaoge narrowed his eyes, saying in a light tone, “If there really were experts who could launch an attack within a short period of time, that would correspond with Xiao Shen’s unusual behaviour before he died.”

“If it is like that, I think I can guess what they want to do.”

Yan Zhaoge sucked in a deep breath, “Keep from moving beforehand to avoid startling us, but lay in ambush nearby, in case Xiao Shen and the others are unable to kill us. I having killed Xiao Shen was only an accident in their eyes.”

“Originally, it was only meant as a supplementary move in case anything went wrong. However, due to the reversal formation, we turned the tables on them in an instant, killing off their first wave into retreat without the situation even falling into a stalemate, whereupon they retreated immediately.”

“They wanted my death to look a little more natural, as if it was only caused by the personal enmity between me and Xiao Shen.”

“That would be beneficial towards obscuring their true goal.”

Zhao Shicheng looked at Yan Zhaoge, “True goal?”

Yan Zhaoge’s gaze was deep and distant, “We have possibly still

underestimated their appetite.”

“Killing me would only be a beginning; even the Eastern Tang would only be something they conveniently got along the way. What they want, is far more than I had predicted.”

The Sacred Sun Clan’s people had only been temporarily forced into a retreat. Seeing Yan Zhaoge and the others leaving the Spirit Wind Canyon, they hurriedly attempted to pursue and attack them.

They did not care about killing or injuring Yan Zhaoge and his party; it was only to get ahold of their trail and not lose track of them completely.

Seeing the way they looked, Yan Zhaoge now felt even more certain that the Sacred Sun Clan most likely had a peak expert in the vicinity, having already hurried over here.

If they could not lose their tail, with the other side’s superior speed, they would definitely catch up in not too long a time.

However, this was, after all, the land of the Eastern Tang, within the Heaven Domain.

With their stronger ability as well as their desire to avoid battle, they quickly made use of the surrounding geography to lose their pursuers.

After that, some news were transmitted over via a secret channel.

Almost as soon as Yan Zhaoge and the others had left, high-ranking experts of the Sacred Sun Clan had entered the Spirit Wind Canyon!

Counting in the time they had used to shake off their pursuers, they had cut it really close indeed.

Yan Zhaoge let out a long breath, his gaze becoming firm and bright, smiling as he looked towards Zhao Shicheng, “Uncle, let us move separately here on out.”

“The enemy’s target is me, but you too have to be careful.”

“Returning to Jingyang City would be equivalent to giving the enemy a definite target.”

Zhao Shicheng’s gaze froze, “I could also be targeted, yet not because of the Eastern Tang? If it’s like this...”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, “It’s good that you know; do not spread the matter.”

“If the Sacred Sun Clan wants to play it big, then let’s just play with them,” Yan Zhaoge smiled, “As the old adage goes, plans cannot keep up with changes.”

Hearing this, Zhao Shicheng's gaze shook slightly, as he stared silently at Yan Zhaoge.

As Yan Zhaoge met his gaze calmly, Zhao Shicheng nodded slowly, "Alright. Remember to be cautious in all matters; do not forget about your own personal safety."

"Zhaoge firmly remembers Uncle's teachings," Yan Zhaoge answered, "I will properly pay attention to and grasp the balance between concealing our movements and drawing the enemy's attention."

Watching as Zhao Shicheng departed, Yan Zhaoge sent a sound transmission to Ah Hu, passing him a few instructions.

The Ah Hu who would definitely not head west when the Young Master said to head east or catch a chicken when the Young Master said to beat a dog, fell into a slightly dazed state.

As if he had bitten his own tongue, his voice continuously stuttered, "You...Youn...Young Master, isn't this a little..."

HSSB 84: Life Is Like A Stage, Fully Dependent On One's Acting Skills!

Watching the Ah Hu who appeared as though he had bitten his tongue, Yan Zhaoge laughed, shaking his head, “What are you so tensed up about?”

“You just need to report the information we currently have on hand as well as my conjecture. The final plan as well as decision—we can just wait for their notification.”

“If they want to start a big show, we'll just continue acting the rest of it out.”

“If they want to be conservative, we'll just immediately hide wherever's safe. After all, this isn't the Fire Domain. Even if the Sacred Sun Clan's people want to dig a few metres deep into the ground in order to search us out, it also won't be that easy.”

Listening to Yan Zhaoge's words, Ah Hu grimaced as though his teeth hurt a little, “Young Master, we're really playing a little too big this time. Under normal circumstances, this wouldn't be something that someone at our level could stick a hand in.”

“If we are even slightly careless, even if the general victory goes to our Broad Creed Mountain, you yourself could also be sacrificed in the process.”

Hearing his words, Yan Zhaoge laughed, “Whether or not the

effort is worth it, depends on whether or not the potential gains are huge enough.”

Retracting his smile, he said slowly, “No matter how many times he comes, I would also slaughter that Xiao Shen, never ever going soft on him.”

“However, in terms of the clan’s overall power, we are indeed a step behind the Sacred Sun Clan. If we don’t think of a way to make up for this gap and just go on as usual, we would be lagging behind with every step.”

“After all, the Sacred Sun Clan is also progressing, and will not just stand still waiting for us. Conversely, they will make use of their lead to try to weaken us as much as possible.”

Yan Zhaoge looked at Ah Hu, “It is actually you who shouldn’t take the risk with me, lest you be inadvertently harmed in the process.”

Ah Hu gave a simple and honest laugh, “I’ll definitely be following you, Young Master.”

“Anyway, if there were to be no one at all by your side, that would be too abnormal.”

“Our immediately leaving the Spirit Wind Canyon could still be attributed to us being concerned about the situation over at the Eastern Tang; our enemy might not suspect anything. However, if

you move alone, they will immediately know that their plan has already been exposed.

Yan Zhaoge patted his shoulders, “Go and relay the news first; we’ll make further plans then.”

Ah Hu nodded, “Yes, Young Master.”

The group from Broad Creed Mountain moved stealthily, making many twists and turns to avoid the notice of the Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners.

The Sacred Sun Clan mostly had a clear idea of whatever industries their side possessed in the Eastern Tang. Now, there was strict monitoring going on everywhere, especially on the road back to Jingyang City.

However, Broad Creed Mountain had after all operated here for many years, also possessing the support of the King of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, Zhao Shicheng. A few secret industries as well as gathering points were something that the Sacred Sun Clan was not privy to.

As Yan Zhaoge had thought, if they devoted all their efforts to hiding in the Heaven Domain, the Sacred Sun Clan would be hard-pressed to find them within a short period of time.

This was unless the Eastern Tang completely fell under their control, allowing them to completely search through the entire

area with the patience of plowing land.

A few days later, Xu Chuan came to find Yan Zhaoge, “Young Master Yan, King Zhao and the others went to Prince Jin, Zhao Shilie’s fief!”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “Good move.”

“Our concealing ourselves and not returning to Jingyang City could still be understood, but as the head of a kingdom, if Uncle Zhao did not return to his own capital, it would inevitably raise suspicion.”

“However, if he instead made a trip to Zhao Shilie’s fief, going there and back, he would have bought much time cleanly and without leaving any traces behind.”

“Zhao Shilie was injured by Uncle, his connection with the Jingyang Grand Formation completely severed.”

“Without the Jingyang Grand Formation, remaining in Jingyang City would be like waiting for Uncle to come back, close the doors and beat the dog. His only option would be to retreat to his own fief and wait for an opportunity to arise once more-awaiting that moment when the battle between the East Rising Lord and Elder Qin is finally decided.”

Yan Zhaoge stroked his lower chin, “The Sacred Sun Clan must have supported Zhao Shilie with a considerable amount of

resources.”

“Uncle raiding his old nest and getting whatever he requires from it, he would then be able to use it to fix whatever was damaged.”

Hearing his words, Xu Chuan nodded, “Having failed to obtain the Jingyang Grand Formation, the role that Zhao Shilie will be able to play in this war has fallen to a very limited one.”

“The Sacred Sun Clan’s peak experts having their fair share of problems to deal with, they most likely don’t have the time to care about him. Zhao Shilie can only hole up and peacefully await the moment where everything has been settled before emerging once again.”

“If the East Rising Lord and the other experts of the Sacred Sun Clan obtain victory, Jingyang City would still find it hard to defend itself. Zhao Shilie could naturally then rise back up behind the East Rising Lord and the others.”

“If the East Rising Lord’s side is defeated, Zhao Shilie will decisively retreat into the Fire Domain, requesting the protection of the Sacred Sun Clan.”

Xu Chuan looked at Yan Zhaoge somewhat hesitantly, “However, if as Young Master Yan predicted, the Sacred Sun Clan has experts other than what we had predicted earlier lying hidden in wait, also having some sort of scheme, over at Zhao Shilie’s fief...”

Yan Zhaoge shook his head, “They already don’t see anything in Zhao Shilie’s bunch.”

“Moreover...” Yan Zhaoge narrowed his eyes, “Moreover, I having killed Xiao Shen, their primary target should now be me.”

Saying thus, he turned to look at Xu Chuan, “I have troubled Elder Xu and my fellow Broad Creed Mountain disciples in accompanying me in taking this risk.”

Xu Chuan smiled, “Young Master Yan is being too serious; I believe that Young Master Yan will definitely prosper despite facing danger.”

Yan Zhaoge glanced at him, “Why do you say that?”

Xu Chuan sent over a sound transmission, “While the Sacred Sun Clan has experts present, Young Master Yan should also have something that you are leaning on, isn’t it?”

“Young Master Yan killing Xiao Shen should only have been an accident; perhaps the original target you were aiming for wasn’t the Sacred Sun Clan. I suspect that it’s...”

Xu Chuan’s finger traced out a ‘[Yan](#)’ character in the air.

Yan Xu’s ‘Yan’

Yan Zhaoge slowly shook his head, “This matter concerns some

confidential information; even I myself am not too sure on the exact details of the situation.”

“However, you had best not be too optimistic. Travelling together with me, the situation that you lot will face might very possibly be worse than the worst case scenario you have pictured.”

Hearing his words, Xu Chuan was slightly taken aback.

However, he didn't go further to question Yan Zhaoge, instead answering with a stern expression on his face, “As one of the clan's Acting Elders in the Eastern Tang, with outside enemies having invaded, I am duty-bound to stand on the frontlines. Even if I die as a result, it would be because it was in my fate to face this tribulation.”

Yan Zhaoge waved his hands, “While it is said that way, sometimes, when temporarily giving up would be a wise choice, the sin of not having battled should not be pursued.”

“As for me, I was born in Broad Creed Mountain, my father being one of the most important Elders of the clan. I share the clan's honour and glory and have enjoyed the clan's resources as well as granted privileges, with the clan protecting me from the wind and the rain.”

“Thus, when I am required to stand out to do something for the clan, I definitely won't shrink back.”

“Dying pointlessly in doing something with no value at all is something that I definitely won’t do. However, taking risks-I’m fine with that.”

Yan Zhaoge looked at Xu Chuan, “However, the lot of you have no need to accompany me in doing so.”

Xu Chuan answered solemnly, “Young Master Yan can rest easy. I know the rules. What shouldn’t be asked, I won’t question.”

“As for the others, whether or not they are willing, I will also not force them. At the same time, I will also make the appropriate preparations, guaranteeing that no suspicions will be raised.”

“As long as I don’t end up being a burden instead, I myself, am willing to take this risk alongside Young Master Yan.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “You definitely won’t be a burden, Elder Xu. As a Xiantian Martial Scholar, your cultivation base is even stronger than mine.”

“However, the crux of the matter this time doesn’t lie with the level of our cultivation bases,” Yan Zhaoge gazed towards the distance, saying in a light tone, “The crux of the matter this time lies with keeping an accurate grasp on information, as well as the concealing of our true goal.”

“Life is like a stage, fully dependent on one’s acting skills ah!”

The last two sentences were said softly and in an obscured manner. Xu Chuan was unable to hear it clearly, as he could only look towards Yan Zhaoge with a blur expression on his face.

HSSB 85: Broad Creed Mountain's Pain

As they switched their hiding place once more, Ah Hu turned back and gazed into the distance.

This was the direction of the Spirit Wind Canyon, although it had long since gone out of sight.

Ah Hu said a little sorrily, “The surface installations of the Spirit Wind Canyon have all been destroyed. Still, fortunately, the various mining resources located underground, the Cloud-Veined Crystals included, were not damaged.”

Standing by the side, Xu Chuan was not really disturbed by this, “Even while the Sacred Sun Clan has gained control of that area, they also won’t go around causing wanton destruction. If they want to let out their anger, it isn’t to the point where they would let it all out on the little, unimportant Spirit Wind Canyon. Damaging some of the structures left behind by our clan and leaving some marks behind would already be about it.”

“As long as the secret of the Jade Essence is not leaked out, even if they occupy the Spirit Wind Canyon, it would also be for the ordinary mining of resources.”

Xu Chuan looked towards Yan Zhaoge, sighing as he said some words of praise, “Everyone under the heavens, previously all underestimated Young Master Yan.”

“Even not mentioning his important contributions like the

Internal Crystal Furnace and the Cloud-Veined Crystals, his personal strength alone is something that the entire current younger generation would have to bow down before.”

Ah Hu gave a simple and honest laugh, “It is laughable how before, they were still doubting my Young Master’s position as one of the current era’s Four Young Masters.”

“The World Illuminating Young Master Huang Jie is but ranked alongside Xiao Shen and Chao Yuanlong as one of the Four Rising Suns, but while at the same cultivation level as Xiao Shen and Chao Yuanlong, my Young Master defeated them as easily as retrieving an object from his bag.”

Xu Chuan pondered as he said, “If it is the World Illuminating Master Huang Jie, other than the fleeting news of him becoming a Martial Scholar that year, little information about him has been heard these past few years.”

“Be it as one of the Sacred Sun Clan’s Four Rising Suns or one of the current era’s Four Young Masters, the World Illuminating Young Master is also the most secretive one. It is indeed a little hard to determine his current level of power.”

“Not counting the World Illuminating Young Master, out of the Sacred Sun Clan’s Four Rising Suns, there is only the Shining Sword Tang Yonghao who might be able to contend with Young Master Yan a little, I guess.”

“But even if it is Tang Yonghao, it would probably be impossible

for him to be like Young Master Yan, easily defeating Xiao Shen and Chao Yuanlong whilst at the same cultivation level.”

The Shining Sword Tang Yonghao, publicly recognised as the head of the Four Rising Suns, the oldest amongst the four.

At the same time, he was also the most famous genius of the Sacred Sun Clan’s younger generation.

As a result of the World Illuminating Young Master Huang Jie keeping too much of a low profile, if not for the fact that he was the son of the current Clan Chief, his radiance would have been completely obscured by Tang Yonghao.

In the lands where the Sacred Sun Clan sat supreme, there were many who hailed Tang Yonghao as the current younger generation’s number one figure in the entire Eight Extremities World.

Not counting the Maidens of Extreme Yin whose situation was unique, not factoring anything else but only looking at a martial practitioner’s personal strength, Tang Yonghao towered over the younger generation of the Eight Extremities World.

Of course, were it in the Domains ruled by the other Sacred Grounds, this point definitely wouldn’t be admitted.

But everyone agreed that at the very least, Tang Yonghao was one of the strongest contenders for the younger generation’s

number one figure.

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “Tang Yonghao has some real ability. However, as I see it, what’s harder to come by is that he does things in a somewhat open and aboveboard manner.”

“Still, if he wants to compete for the position of the younger generation’s number one figure, he’ll first have to be able to defeat our clan’s senior apprentice-brother Xu.”

Xu Chuan smiled, nodding.

The ‘Heavenly Roc’ Xu Fei of Broad Creed Mountain, of the same age as Tang Yonghao, the two having contested with each other ever since their youth all the way till they had become the outstanding geniuses of today. He was one of the leading figures of Broad Creed Mountain’s younger generation.

Yan Zhaoge shook his head as he broke out smiling as well. Thinking about it, Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan, with the rivalry between their respective younger generations, could be described as neither being willing to give an inch to the other.

Xu Fei vs Tang Yonghao, Lu Wen vs Xiao Shen, the Yan Zhaoge of the past vs Chao Yuanlong, etcetera.

Continuing to look at those who were even younger, of their representative-type figures, Sikong Qing also bore the heavy

responsibility of matching up against Meng Wan.

Looking up the age ladder, the enmities and rivalry also continued unceasingly.

Both sides either both had victories or defeats, or were always locked in a stalemate.

It was really ‘You are the wind and I am the sand, entangling entangling until the end’.

All these years, other than Yan Zhaoge’s father Yan Di who had completely suppressed all his peers, both sides had always been contesting on such terms.

Strictly speaking, not counting Yan Di’s batch, the Sacred Sun Clan had always still been holding the advantage.

This was the result of the Sacred Sun Clan’s advantage of being stronger overall.

Xu Chuan sighed, “I’ve heard that the old Clan Chief has the intention of going into death seclusion, just that it is unknown whether or not he will be able to become a Martial Saint.”

Hearing his words, Yan Zhaoge did not speak.

Not counting that Sacred Sun Saint of the legends who had gone

missing, whether he was dead or alive a total mystery, what Broad Creed Mountain lacked in comparison to the Sacred Sun Clan was a Martial Saint.

That year, having resisted the invasion of the Flame Devil World, Broad Creed Mountain had suffered catastrophic losses.

Luckily, with the grace of their ancestors, with a Sacred Artifact guarding their clan, Broad Creed Mountain's guardian formation, through the efforts of numerous generations, was impregnable.

One had to thank the Heaven Diviner Zhan Xilou, who, though having died, in the years that he had been in power, had helped Broad Creed Mountain to preserve the last of its original vitality.

Over the years, having built up and accumulated its strength, disciples had finally began coming in an endless stream again as Broad Creed Mountain gradually developed, at least not having devalued the name of the Sacred Grounds.

However, Broad Creed Mountain's greatest pain was that after the Heaven Diviner Zhan Xilou had fallen, it had yet to produce even a single Martial Saint.

Transcending the impure and entering Sainthood-this was an extremely difficult task.

Even within the entire Eight Extremities World, the number of Martial Saints there currently were could be counted with one's

fingers.

Yan Zhaoge slowly said, “The injuries Grand Master received that year did still eventually leave behind some hidden problems for him, causing him to not be able to tread that very last step even after such a long time.”

Xu Chuan face was also filled with sympathy and regret.

Yan Zhaoge’s Grand Master, Broad Creed Mountain’s number one expert as well as its current Clan Chief, Heaven Equalling Yuan Zhengfeng.

He was publicly regarded as the first person below the Martial Saint realm in the entire Eight Extremities World, at the peak of the Martial Grandmaster realm, a longtime Transcending Impurity Martial Grandmaster.

With his excellent talent as well as fearsome martial prowess, becoming a Martial Saint would originally have been a minor issue for him.

However, in his younger years, he had been fundamentally damaged and had always been unable to remedy this, such that even after having entered the Transcending Impurity stage for many years, he had always been unable to take that final step and tread into the Martial Saint realm.

Even martial practitioners outside of Broad Creed Mountain

often sighed in pity at how the old Clan Chief was just a paper-thin distance away from the Martial Saint realm, yet for him, taking that final step had the difficulty of crossing a lake of lightning.

Meanwhile, the Sacred Sun Clan had its former Clan Chief, the current Grand Elder 'The Sun Comes East' Huang Guanglie, also known as the East Coming Martial Saint.

The father of the World Illuminating Young Master Huang Jie, the old Clan Chief Huang Guanglie's son Huang Xu, was the current Chief of the Sacred Sun Clan, also a longtime Martial Grandmaster expert.

The Sacred Sun Clan was similarly protected by a Sacred Artifact. The combination of the Martial Saint Huang Guanglie and that Sacred Artifact together with Huang Xu and the other numerous experts of the Sacred Sun Clan who were constantly surfacing together gave the Sacred Sun Clan the power and authority of the current era's top Sacred Ground.

Broad Creed Mountain was also unwilling to start a full-blown war with the Sacred Sun Clan as long as it wasn't absolutely necessary due to very this reason.

The Sacred Sun Clan similarly kept Broad Creed Mountain's development in their eyes, having constantly redoubled their efforts in keeping them in check all these years.

The two Sacred Ground's current contest in the Eastern Tang this time was only a rather more intense clash of theirs.

Many years ago, Huang Guanglie had gone into secluded cultivation once again. When he emerged, it was unknown what changes would have come on him and hard to estimate how much his strength would have progressed.

Broad Creed Mountain's Clan Chief Yuan Zhengfeng's current intention to go into death seclusion in an attempt to break through into the Martial Saint realm was also due to the fact that the pressure the Sacred Sun Clan was exerting on them had been getting greater and greater in recent years.

Therefore, although Xiao Shen had first made a killing move, when Yan Zhaoge had really killed him, Xu Chuan and the others naturally had had complicated, unsettled feelings well up within their hearts.

Yan Zhaoge gazed towards the distant horizon, in the direction of Broad Creed Mountain.

“The preparations are almost complete; after everything is in position, I can open the furnace and begin attempting to concoct the pill.”

HSSB 86: Lacking Most In Time

For no matter what reason, Yan Zhaoge's Grand Master, the Heaven Equalling Yuan Zhengfeng, was currently still only a Martial Grandmaster.

Under him, Broad Creed Mountain's three most outstanding Martial Grandmasters were hailed as the Broad Creed Three Heroes.

First was Yan Zhaoge's eldest apprentice-uncle, the First Seat Elder of Broad Creed Mountain's Disciplinary Hall, the 'Iron Lion King' Shi Tie.

Next was Yan Zhaoge's second apprentice-uncle, the First Seat Elder of Broad Creed Mountain's Assignment Hall, 'Hidden Dragon' Fang Zhun.

Finally, there was Yan Zhaoge's father, Yuan Zhengfeng's Final Disciple, the current First Seat Elder of Broad Creed Mountain's Martial Inheritance Hall, Yan Di.

The four of them, coupled with the other experts of Broad Creed Mountain, meant that Broad Creed Mountain was actually superior to the Sacred Sun Clan in terms of the strength of their Martial Grandmasters.

Even excluding Yuan Zhengfeng, in the area of Martial Grandmasters, Broad Creed Mountain was in no way inferior to the Sacred Sun Clan.

But, sigh. There was still the Martial Saint Huang Guanglie above them.

Causing Broad Creed Mountain's martial practitioners to be even more worried was the fact that Yuan Zhengfeng was gradually getting older.

Under normal circumstances, Yuan Zhengfeng could actually only be considered to be at his prime, rather than being old.

However, with the injuries he suffered that year having injured his very fundamentals, what was affected was not just merely whether or not he could become a Martial Saint. His unrecovered injuries had also been affecting his longevity.

As time passed and dragged on, hopes of Yuan Zhengfeng achieving his breakthrough into the Martial Saint realm correspondingly decreased.

Of Broad Creed Mountain's other experts, within the elder generation, he himself was already the one with the most hope of succeeding in that breakthrough.

As for the senior generation with Yan Di at their head, there were also some who had hope of becoming a Martial Saint.

But even more so than Yuan Zhengfeng, they required more time as well as opportunities.

However, what Broad Creed Mountain currently lacked the most was just that-time.

First, they were facing the pressure of the Sacred Sun Clan. Next, there was also his own body to worry about. Due to these, the old Clan Chief Yuan Zhengfeng had no choice but to resolve himself.

He would try to step into the Martial Saint realm within a short period of time, and he would either succeed, or perish in the attempt.

As Yan Di's son, Yan Zhaoge was completely clear on the situation within the clan.

He naturally knew what Broad Creed Mountain currently needed the most.

Yan Zhaoge's store of knowledge grew as he increased in strength and carried out some analysis and research, making use of what he learnt as he combined pure theory with actual practicality.

How to create a Martial Saint was something that Yan Zhaoge was currently still in the process of researching.

Transcending impurities and achieving Sainthood-the difficulty of that was immense.

Even if there was a way, in the current Eight Extremities World, the required resources as well as environmental conditions were also very hard to fulfil.

However, treating the problem by its root.

Ever since Yan Zhaoge had arrived in this world and came to understand the environment he had been placed in, the area of research he had given the most priority to was how to treat the old Clan Chief, Yuan Zhengfeng's old injuries.

He had spent far more time and effort on this than on the Internal Crystal Furnace and such, just that the difficulty of this matter was also higher.

If he succeeded, it would not just be about Yuan Zhengfeng having his injuries healed. He would also be able to attempt his breakthrough into the Martial Saint realm with a greater assurance of success.

The pressure brought about by Huang Guanglie having gone into secluded cultivation once more caused Yuan Zhengfeng and Broad Creed Mountain to reveal their keen edge as they advanced, no longer continuing to move like they normally did.

Ah Hu grinned from the side, "On this matter, the World Illuminating Young Master Huang Jie is often nowhere to be seen. Could it be that that old Clan Chief of the Sacred Sun Clan is teaching and grooming him personally?"

Hearing his words, Xu Chuan smiled, “This possibility does exist. However, even if it is true, he should only be giving some simple pointers. Teaching him thoroughly-Huang Guanglie doesn’t have so much time for that.”

Yan Zhaoge’s eyes narrowed, “The World Illuminating Young Master Huang Jie...interesting.”

Now, Xu Chuan received a message sent over by one of his subordinates, his expression instantly turning grave.

“Young Master Yan, there are unusual movements by the border. The Sacred Sun Clan has dispatched even more of its experts into Eastern Tang territory. Their cultivation and number are unknown.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, “As to our positions, release some fake news to bewilder our enemies.”

“Keep in contact with the clan; we will need people to meet and guide us as well as help conceal our movements.”

Xu Chuan answered, “I understand.”

Yan Zhaoge gazed towards the defensive line of the Eastern Tang capital Jingyang City, his gaze distant.

Continually shifting their locations, they did encounter search parties of the Sacred Sun Clan in the process, but very quickly

killed their way out and escaped.

Just having switched their hiding place once more, Yan Zhaoge and the other suddenly received news.

The Eastern Tang's First Prince, Zhao Yuan, was currently being surrounded by martial practitioners of the Sacred Sun Clan.

Yan Zhaoge looked like he was smiling but also somewhat not as he raised his brows slightly, "While Brother Zhao Yuan does not actually hold the title of the Supervising Crown Prince, at this time, we should grab hold of this chance to put on a good performance in front of him."

"With Uncle Zhao on conquest abroad, what is he doing here, outside of Jingyang City?"

"Giving the chance to the Third Prince Zhao Sheng just like that?"

Xu Chuan answered, seemingly somewhat vexed, "When Prince Jin, Zhao Shilie retreated, he destroyed a number of the spirit patterns of the Jingyang Grand Formation along the way."

"With the other Martial Grandmaster of the Eastern Tang sitting over Jingyang City, Zhao Yuan and Zhao Sheng were both ordered to repair the spirit patterns."

He looked at Yan Zhaoge, saying in a low tone, "Our clan's Elder

Yan, meanwhile, brought some martial practitioners of our clan out of the city to clean up the remnants of the Sacred Sun Clan and Zhao Shilie's gang."

"Originally, they had still thought that it would very safe, but because of Xiao Shen's death, the Sacred Sun Clan sent more troops in. That's why they encountered the enemy so easily."

Yan Zhaoge asked, "In that case, what about Yan Xu? He doesn't care?"

Xu Chuan said drily, "The Third Prince Zhao Sheng was the first to meet danger, and Elder Yan went over to assist him. Within a short period of time, he probably won't be able to make it in time to assist the First Prince."

Yan Zhaoge smiled, not saying anything as he lowered his head to look at the map, "It is not far from our current location ah."

Xu Chuan frowned, looking at him, "Young Master Yan, we..."

"Under the circumstances that we are able to do so, we naturally have to help him out a bit," Yan Zhaoge snapped his fingers, promptly striding out.

Xu Chuan gave a wry smile, "Young Master, it'll be whatever you say. Regardless, this Xu will be risking his life to accompany the lord today."

Yan Zhaoge's party climbed over hills and passed through ravines, very soon coming to feel a quaking of the earth ahead of them.

Before them, the very air itself felt somewhat like it was on fire, releasing waves of roiling heat which grew more and more intense as they neared.

“This is a characteristic of the Sacred Sun Clan's martial arts,” Yan Zhaoge and the others all well knew this within their hearts as they continued moving along speedily. Indeed, they soon saw that in the distance at the foot of a mountain, two groups of martial practitioners were currently locked in an intense battle.

One side was precisely formed of Eastern Tang martial practitioners with their First Prince, Zhao Yuan, at their head.

And the other side, naturally consisted of martial practitioners of the Sacred Sun Clan.

The Sacred Sun Clan had the numerical advantage, its people also possessing a stronger individual power. Zhao Yuan and the others looked already to be in a very precarious situation indeed.

Not saying anything, Yan Zhaoge immediately led Xu Chuan and the others in killing into the battlefield from the enemy's flank.

With the situation as urgent as a fire that had to be extinguished, Yan Zhaoge held nothing back as the Jade Dragon Sword danced

and coiled, instantly killing till the enemy troops fell apart like a mountain collapsing.

The group from Broad Creed Mountain killed their way to in front of Zhao Yuan, who smiled bitterly, “Having heard that the Sacred Sun Clan had sent in more troops, we had already been retreating as at fast as speed as was possible. Who knew that we would still be surrounded and trapped.”

Yan Zhaoge thought, “My return path to Jingyang City was a key focus of the enemy’s interception strategy. This was you guys going and colliding into it head on.”

“Brother, this time, I have implicated you. It will be hard returning to Jingyang City; we should probably go somewhere else instead.”

As he said this, the Broad Creed Mountain and Eastern Tang Kingdom forces met, together ripping apart the encirclement of the Sacred Sun Clan martial practitioners and breaking through to the outside.

After having lost their pursuers, both sides finally had the time for some idle talk.

Zhao Yuan shook his head as he walked, “Zhaoge, your killing Xiao Shen might have caused your name to resound throughout the entire world, but you should still be mindful of the Sacred Sun Clan’s revenge.”

Implicated by me-this was not merely referring to the Sacred Sun Clan...

As Yan Zhaoge was pondering about this, his heart suddenly jumped.

Ah Hu and Xu Chuan, the two Xiantian Martial Scholars, both gazed into the distance.

There, a massive golden sun slowly and gradually rose up from amongst the numerous mountains.

Within the massive golden sun, a figure gradually materialised. It was a one-eyed Elder with a square face and big ears, wearing a golden robe on his body.

A Martial Grandmaster expert!

HSSB 87: Was This Within Your Predictions?

Gazing over, Yan Zhaoge saw that one-eyed Elder tread on the air, walking over from amongst the numerous mountains.

Looking downwards, his gaze swept the area before finally landing on Yan Zhaoge, “You’ve indeed come. I would like to see—where can you run to this time?”

“Yan Zhaoge, what a great dog courage you have.”

“First, you sheltered a traitor of my Sacred Sun Clan in escaping. Now, you’ve actually even dared to kill a disciple of my Sacred Sun Clan.”

“You must pay with your life for what you did to Xiao Shen!”

With the enemy’s gaze fixed upon him, Yan Zhaoge’s entire body heated up as he felt as though his insides were about to be incinerated, like his entire body was about to ignite and catch fire on its own.

Yan Zhaoge’s expression did not change, “You mean then that I should have obediently stretched out my neck and let Xiao Shen kill me, huh?”

“Xiao Shen wanted to kill me. Therefore, I killed him. It’s as simple as that.”

The one-eyed Elder's eyebrows stood on end, a fierce light within his eyes.

From that expression of his, it was as though the person before him was not Yan Zhaoge born of Broad Creed Mountain, but any martial practitioner born of a random clan or sect. Dying at the hands of his Sacred Sun Clan's people would, conversely, even be an honour.

He stared coldly at Yan Zhaoge, "Oh?"

"Well, this old man also wants to kill you now. I'd like to see what you can do about it; maybe kill this old man instead?"

Yan Zhaoge laughed, but did not speak.

A voice now resounded from behind him, "You can't kill him."

As the winds and the clouds surged, a strong aura appeared.

A figure arrived soaring through the air. When he had just opened his mouth to speak, he had still been a considerable distance away, but before his voice had landed, he had already neared.

It was an old, emaciated Elder, his hands behind his back, his feet moving neither quickly nor slowly.

Smiling, Yan Zhaoge said, “Elder, thank you for your trouble.”

The emaciated Elder waved his hands dismissively, “It’s fine.”

He came in front of that one-eyed Elder, saying mildly, “This old man also wants to see how you can kill my Broad Creed Mountain disciple in front of this old man.”

Seeing this emaciated Elder appear, Xu Chuan immediately let out a sigh of relief, “Our clan’s reinforcements have also arrived.”

“As expected, Young Master Yan wouldn’t place himself at such risk so easily. Whatever he does, he also has well thought out.”

The Sacred Sun Clan had sent in some experts as reinforcements, entering the Eastern Tang Kingdom.

Naturally, after having received the news of Yan Zhaoge’s killing of Xiao Shen, Broad Creed Mountain also didn’t sit back and do nothing.

It was just that both sides had needed some time to react.

In comparison, while the Eastern Tang was rather remote, at the end of the day, it was still located within the Heaven Domain. It would definitely be easier for Broad Creed Mountain experts to reinforce.

However, the battlefields of the two sides were diffused haphazardly over a wide area, not easy to discern.

How accurately they could predict the movements as well as the positions of the other side would have to look at the power and influence that they possessed here in the Eastern Tang itself.

Looking at it this way, Zhao Yuan having met danger and Yan Zhaoge having been ambushed meant that Yan Xu had at least committed the professional error of failing in his duties and not confirming their enemy's situation clearly.

Xu Chuan's felt a slight chill within his heart, "Is Yan Xu really doing this on purpose?"

"He's gone mad; even if he argues that it was just a mistake on his part, he will still be held somewhat responsible for it!"

However, what made Xu Chuan let out a sign of relief was the fact that Yan Zhaoge had indeed long been prepared as expected. In having taken the risk of coming with him, he had gambled right.

That Sacred Sun Clan Elder looked at the Broad Creed Mountain Martial Grandmaster before him, saying coldly, "Our cultivation levels are similar-you think you can protect him?"

Between his words, he lifted up his palm, the golden sunlight that illuminated the surrounding area agglomerating into a single mass, converging within it.

Next, as though lifting the sun itself, he smashed downwards with his palm!

The Heaven Striking Palm that was displayed by him, compared to that other Martial Grandmaster of the Sacred Sun Clan in the Spirit Wind Canyon, was even stronger!

Zhao Yuan and the others who were present all fell into nervousness.

As the one-eyed Elder had said, when two sides possessed close to the same level of strength, if one of them wanted to kill someone, while the other wanted to protect him, the defending party would be placed at an absolute disadvantage, with the initiative mostly having fallen to the enemy.

It was even to the point where perhaps being too concerned with the target of his protection, the defending party might instead reveal some flaws in his own defence which could easily be taken advantage of by the enemy, causing himself too to be sacrificed.

At that point, the guardian and the guarded could only become fresh meat on the chopping board at the hands of their enemy, unable to do anything but wallow in hatred.

Still, that emaciated Elder was still completely at ease, neither hurried nor impatient, “Having appeared here today, this old man naturally has the confidence to protect the disciples of my clan with my own power.”

“If there’s more of you, I still wouldn’t dare to say it; but if there’s only you, then, of course.”

As he said this, he crossed his palms, both of their surfaces turning a faint gold.

Countless palm shadows began spreading outwards to envelop all directions, golden streams of light intertwining high in mid-air as they resembled numerous golden ropes, trapping the heavens and imprisoning the earth.

As the Heaven Striking Palm of that Sacred Sun Clan Elder descended, it was surrounded and trapped by those numerous golden ropes.

The power of the extremely fierce and unyielding palm strike was constantly whittled down by that extremely soft and gentle yet also extremely tough power, temporarily unable to break free.

“Golden Curtain Palm?” the one-eyed Elder’s eyebrows instantly stood on end.

The martial art his opponent was currently displaying was precisely Broad Creed Mountain’s direct lineage martial art, the Golden Curtain Palm of the Eight Extreme Arts.

Looking on from the side, Yan Zhaoge also nodded his head, thinking, “It’s almost reached the point of perfection.”

While in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, Yan Zhaoge had also seen Elder Kong unleash this martial art, and in an even more profound and unpredictable manner at that. However, that should mostly be attributed to him being at a higher level of cultivation.

In terms of attainment in the Golden Curtain Palm, this emaciated Elder should already be at the peak amongst those at the same cultivation level.

Just after the emaciated Elder unleashed the Golden Curtain Palm, his figure abruptly shook, turning ethereal as he began moving quickly and agilely like the wind.

This was actually yet another of the Eight Extreme Arts, the Wind Fire Calamities.

Exerting power with the calamity of fire, moving about like the calamity of wind.

At this moment, the emaciated Elder had even completely sealed off all the routes through which his opponent could launch a sneak attack with a Leap of the Rising Sun.

That Sacred Sun Clan Elder was angered to the point of steam rising up from his forehead.

Although the other party's strength was similar to his, his way of fighting was soft and flexible to the extreme, causing him to have

strength but be unable to exert it.

It would be difficult for the emaciated Elder to defeat him, but similarly, he too had no way to break through his defences.

Let alone securing a victory, even if he wanted to go deal with Yan Zhaoge and the others, he could only stare at them helplessly for now.

“Zhaoge, all of you leave this place first,” the emaciated Elder said mildly whilst also in the midst of breaking up his opponent’s attacks.

Yan Zhaoge and the others immediately retreated. When two Martial Grandmasters did not hold back and fought with all their might, just the resultant shockwaves alone would be able to sweep over and destroy the entire surrounding area.

But they had not gone far when a hot-tempered voice suddenly resounded, shocking the ears to the point of them wanting to go deaf, “You’re going nowhere!”

Hearing this voice, Yan Zhaoge instinctively raised his brows.

“The Ghost Hatchet Elder, Han Sheng!”

“Even with this kind of situation, he still actually dares to show himself?”

As the black fog swirled, an old man, his hair and beard bristling, suddenly appeared.

His entire body emanated a terrifying atmosphere, not inferior to the two Martial Grandmasters currently clashing right here in the least.

It was precisely the Ghost Hatchet Elder, Han Sheng, who had made a brief, fleeting appearance previously at the Sealing Dragon Abyss and also had some ties with Ye Jing.

As the Ghost Hatchet Elder appeared, his gaze came to fall on Yan Zhaoge.

Looking over, Yan Zhaoge saw that within the other party's gaze, other than violence, there also existed some greed as well as a desire to probe out something.

"He wants a certain something of mine," Yan Zhaoge's mind flashed quickly, as he instantly came up with this guess.

But before he could consider carefully what that thing was, with a furious roar, Han Sheng had already extended his palms, a black qi having converged within as a gigantic hand that obscured the heavens and concealed the sun grabbed down towards Yan Zhaoge's head.

Frowning, the emaciated Elder immediately executed the Wind

Fire Calamities, his figure turning as he came to block before Han Sheng.

The power of his Golden Curtain Palm spread out, instantly drawing Han Sheng within.

But with this, the pressure on the Sacred Sun Clan Elder over on the other side had instantly decreased greatly.

He executed the Leap of the Rising Sun, forcefully breaking past the obstruction of the emaciated Elder's Golden Curtain Palm, lunging towards Yan Zhaoge!

Xu Chuan's heart nearly jumped out of his chest as he looked towards Yan Zhaoge, his face having turned terribly pale.

“Young Master Yan, please don't tell me that this was within your predictions too ah!”

HSSB 88: If You Want To Blame Someone, Blame Yan Xu

The one-eyed Elder executed the Leap of the Rising Sun, moving with the momentum of the sun rising from the east, unable to be blocked.

That Broad Creed Mountain Elder having to face two opponents alone, he inevitably had the feeling of inadequacy.

The Wind Calamity techniques were insufficient in helping him to obstruct the enemy.

Sucking in a deep breath, on the Elder's emaciated face abruptly surfaced an abnormal redness.

Like raging flames blazing up towards the heavens!

The Elder's figure stood firm in mid-air, his thin body suddenly seeming incomparably tall, as though he was towering into the heavens whilst also standing firm on the ground.

His palms pushed out, clashing head-on against the one-eyed Elder's Heaven Striking Palm!

The Ghost Hatchet Elder Han Sheng let out a fierce howl, wielding his palms as he would blades as he chopped forward, as though he was brandishing two great axes and chopping down

with them.

Streaks of black light formed flying axes that did not have a handle, breaking through the horizon like numerous cyclones!

It was Han Sheng's famed martial technique, the Ghost Hatchet Palm!

With the momentum of his palm, a rotating power was born, strange and domineering, resembling the spinning of a flying axe, specialised in breaking through an opponent's defences. Even while it was domineering and sharp, it was also unpredictable in its variations, causing one to be hard-pressed to receive it.

It looked tough and domineering, yet also contained a secret, sinister power within, as though there were ghosts or gods wielding the axes' blades in secret, taking others unawares and causing them to be injured.

Even those who were close in cultivation to him, if they did not know of this, would inevitably suffer a disadvantage.

Of the flying axe cyclones of black light, some moved in a strange arc as they avoided the power of the Broad Creed Mountain Elder's Golden Curtain Palm, others spinning as they forcefully cut through those golden ropes one after another.

Taking advantage of the time when the Broad Creed Mountain Elder was engaged by the Sacred Sun Clan's one-eyed Elder, Han

Sheng's attack blotted out the sky and obscured the earth as it headed straight for Yan Zhaoge and the others!

Yan Zhaoge could only feel that all before him was the flickering of black light, the scenery of the entire world having shattered at that very moment.

The shrieks of ghosts resounded by his ears, sharp and piercing, as though he had descended into the infinite hells.

Ah Hu, Xu Chuan and the others all experienced the same thing as well. With a Martial Grandmaster expert having made a move, let alone counterattack, even evading or defending against it was something that they had no idea how to do at all.

“Um, Young Master Yan, was this within your predictions?”

Hearing Xu Chuan's pained voice, Yan Zhaoge stroked his lower jaw, “In truth, no.”

Seeing the Xu Chuan before him begin to laugh bitterly, Yan Zhaoge shook his head, “The Ghost Hatchet Elder Han Sheng, can be considered an unexpected bonus.”

“By common logic, with three great Sacred Grounds fighting it out over here, if he and the Crimson Spirit Flag Master were smart, they wouldn't come to join in this mess.”

“Therefore, I am more willing to term his appearance as: a

pleasant surprise.”

Xu Chuan was stunned.

Yan Zhaoge continued saying leisurely, “Han Sheng came to take revenge for his sworn brother Ye Jing? Go bluff the ghosts.”

“He just wants a certain something from me, the reason for this being unclear. But what this means is that that something on me is very important.”

At this moment, the giant black axes, spinning, were already right before their eyes.

Each giant axe looked to possess a blade that was even more massive than usual houses. As they spun, they seemed to cut through the very heavens and the earth!

Yan Zhaoge’s expression, however, did not change as he snapped his fingers, “That thing is even more important that I had known beforehand, more importantly possessing a secret that I am currently unaware of.”

“Tell me-isn’t that a pleasant surprise?”

Before his words had landed, there was a sudden change in the surroundings.

In the sky above their heads, all the clouds suddenly converged, turning golden.

The middle of the golden cloud layer seemed to have formed a giant vortex, within which the qi of the clouds were agglomerated, now transforming into a massive foot, descending from the skies!

That foot was so massive that it obscured the sky and concealed the sun, as if though belonged to a giant deity.

As the massive foot landed, the air within the surrounding fifty kilometres seemed as though it had been frozen, the wind unable to blow, the clouds unable to drift, even the sunlight seemingly having turned into a bright, crystalline form.

In contrast, outside of those fifty kilometres, shocking waves of qi surged, constantly expanding outwards in all directions as even the mountains looked as though they might collapse.

With the massive golden foot not even having finished stomping downwards yet, just as its shadow fell over them, the heaven-rending giant axes that had been formed of Han Sheng's Ghost Hatchet Palm immediately ceased their spinning, strangely and comically frozen in midair.

Everyone gazed towards the sky, shocked.

Only Yan Zhaoge and that Broad Creed Mountain Martial Grandmaster had their expressions unchanged.

Seeing that massive golden foot, Yan Zhaoge smiled as he bowed, “Eldest-apprentice uncle, you’re here.”

Hearing Yan Zhaoge’s form of address, everyone was shocked once more.

Han Sheng looked on helplessly as pressured by that massive golden foot, the giant black axes that had been formed from the power of his palm began shattering one by one, “The Iron Lion King, Shi Tie?!”

That one-eyed Elder of the Sacred Sun Clan was similarly surprised, “Iron Lion, how have you arrived in the East Heaven Region’s Eastern Tang Kingdom so quickly?”

That Broad Creed Mountain Elder also felt that this was a little unexpected, “Xiao Shen having being killed by Yan Zhaoge, while the clan was quickly notified to send over some experts as reinforcements, hasn’t Elder Shi arrived a little too quickly?”

Xu Chuan, Zhao Yuan and the others, meanwhile, were overjoyed, “Elder Shi!”

Although this person had not yet shown himself, everyone here already knew who he was.

One of the Broad Creed Three Heroes, the First Seat Elder of Broad Creed Mountain’s Disciplinary Hall.

A Martial Grandmaster expert renowned throughout the entire Eight Extremities World, the Iron Lion King, Shi Tie!

His cultivation was even above that of those like Broad Creed Mountain's First Seat Elder in the East Heaven Region, Elder Qin, as well as the Sacred Sun Clan's East Rising Lord.

While Shi Tie had yet to show himself, just this move of his had already put it beyond the shadow of a doubt.

From the layer of clouds resounded a sonorous voice, "We'll talk after I've taken care of things here."

Saying thus, that massive golden foot continued to descend!

Below the massive foot, the very space itself was shaking non-stop. Gazing from afar, it was as though it was distorting, about to collapse due to that at any moment.

The massive foot that the clouds had transformed into seemed as solidified as Vajra at this moment; as it landed, trampling on everything beneath it, everything it touched was completely stomped to a fine powder.

The Ghost Hatchet Elder Han Sheng, had long since turned tail and ran.

The person before him was not the Yan Xu who had constantly entangled with him due to the personal enmity between them yet

always been unable to do anything to him, but an existence who was actually much stronger than that Yan Xu!

However, the more Han Sheng ran, the more he felt his figure slowing, as it became heavier and heavier.

As he looked, he realised that he was literally as good as walking on the spot, unable to move in the slightest.

What was the distance of a foot, felt as faraway as the other end of the world!

As Yan Zhaoge and the others stood by the side, they saw that massive golden foot descend from the sky, stomping on the Ghost Hatchet Elder Han Sheng, that Martial Grandmaster, underfoot!

The massive golden foot formed of the clouds directly transformed into a cage, capturing Han Sheng within.

The clouds within the sky dissipated, gradually revealing a human figure.

He was tall, even half a head taller than Ah Hu who himself could already be considered big.

His skin was dark, the colour of bronze. As his large body stood there, he resembled an extremely tough, indestructible tower of black iron.

With a squarish face and chiseled features which looked as though they had been carved out by a knife, he was in no way handsome, but was masculine and authoritative-looking to the extreme.

This person's appearance was known throughout the entire Eight Extremities World.

He was precisely the First Seat Elder of Broad Creed Mountain's Disciplinary Hall, Shi Tie!

That Sacred Sun Clan Elder's face turned ugly to the extreme, "If Shi Tie was at Broad Creed Mountain before this, only having rushed over upon receiving the news of Xiao Shen's death, he shouldn't have arrived so quickly."

"Was it that he had just happened to be in the East Heaven Region, or...he had made his move and come here long before this?!"

Yan Zhaoge stood where he was, looking at him with a bored expression on his face.

That one-eyed Elder turned to glare at him, looking as though he wanted to gobble him up.

"Don't look at me; if you want to blame someone, blame Yan Xu," Yan Zhaoge shrugged, "This was originally prepared for him,

with you lot the side dish... though, with the changes to the situation now, it seems like he has become the side dish instead.”

HSSB 89: The Iron Lion King

As far back when abnormalities had surfaced in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, when Elder Qin, Zhao Shicheng, the East Rising Lord and others had been preparing to enter the Sealing Dragon Abyss, Yan Zhaoge had already asked Ah Hu to send a message back to the clan.

The reason was naturally something else. Still, what had originally been meant for Yan Xu had now just happened to counter the Sacred Sun Clan's plan instead.

As compared to the experts of the Sacred Sun Clan who had long since arrived here stealthily and lay in wait poised to strike, Shi Tie had not arrived in the Eastern Tang that much later than them.

Yan Zhaoge looked towards the sky.

He saw Shi Tie, that large dark-skinned bloke, whilst also suppressing and trapping the Ghost Hatchet Elder Han Sheng, directly reach out with his hand, grabbing towards that Elder of the Sacred Sun Clan!

Seeing this, the one-eyed Elder roared in anger, "Shi Tie, you dare?!"

Shi Tie's face was expressionless, resembling an unchanging rock forever unweathered by the ravages of time, "What is there not to dare?"

“Your Sacred Sun Clan causing trouble in my Heaven Domain-you must pay the price for that.”

The one-eyed Elder raged angrily, “Your Broad Creed Mountain harbours a disciple who betrayed my Sacred Sun Clan; not just that, your Broad Creed Mountain disciple Yan Zhaoge even killed my Sacred Sun Clan’s core direct disciple Xiao Shen.”

“Do you think, that we will let it go that easily?”

Shi Tie said coldly, “Immorally lascivious, frivolous and dissolute, intending to forcefully defile a fellow member of his clan; your Sacred Sun Clan standing biasedly by the side of such goods, you should logically receive the same kind of end as him.”

Between his words, Shi Tie reached out with his right hand, his palm like glass as it shone with a brilliant light from within, resembling Vajra.

The surrounding clouds and wind once again surged, the golden clouds transforming into a massive palm that blocked off the entire sky, grabbing towards that one-eyed Elder.

“Good! Shi Tie! If you have the ability, spout that nonsense before my Sacred Sun Clan’s Chief as well!” The one-eyed Elder called out hatefully, before he abruptly turned and executed the Leap of the Rising Sun, escaping hurriedly towards the distance.

The Han Sheng whose level of cultivation was not that much inferior to his, had been captured alive by Shi Tie in a single round.

Even the East Rising Lord was not Shi Tie's match, much less the one-eyed Elder. He himself definitely didn't believe that he would be able to hold off Shi Tie.

Now, he only hoped that he would be able to escape.

The Sacred Sun Clan's Leap of the Rising Sun, its fame resounding throughout the entire world.

In terms of the speed of his movement technique, the one-eyed Elder was much, much faster than the Ghost Hatchet Elder Han Sheng.

"Let alone Huang Xu, even if Huang Guanglie were here, this Shi would also say the same thing. This Shi has been soft in whatever areas in his life, just not in his backbone. Even if you break all the bones in my body, I would also say the same thing."

Shi Tie's tone was calm and mild, yet emitting an indomitable will.

That massive golden hand formed of the clouds seemed infinitely large as it stretched directly into the horizon.

However swift that Sacred Sun Clan Elder's Leap of the Rising

Sun, however much its momentum could not be blocked, at the end of the day, it also couldn't escape from beneath Shi Tie's palm!

The massive hand descended, instantly crushing down on the one-eyed Elder!

This one-eyed Elder and the Ghost Hatchet Elder Han Sheng of before both activated their spirit artifacts, one-mid grade, one-low grade, struggling frenetically.

But the cage formed of the golden clouds had them firmly entrapped within, with completely no chance of escape.

Yan Zhaoge looked at Shi Tie's palm that had regained its original form, clicking his tongue as he sighed in praise, "Only cultivating in a single martial art throughout your entire life, eldest apprentice-uncle really has displayed devoting yourself wholeheartedly and exclusively to a single thing and excelling in everything based off it to the extreme."

Hearing this from the side, Ah Hu, Xu Chuan and the others all nodded in agreement.

A Martial Scholar of Broad Creed Mountain like Yan Zhaoge had already cultivated in two of the Eight Extreme Arts, the Big Dipper Sword as well as the Tushita Palm.

Broad Creed Mountain's Martial Grandmasters like Yan Xu, Elder Qin and Elder Kong, even more so, concurrently cultivated in

many of Broad Creed Mountain's peak martial arts, and maybe even some martial arts not of Broad Creed Mountain.

It was just that amongst all of these, only one or two were their main martial arts, the ones that they were the most proficient in. The rest were all supplementary and dabbled in for reference.

Not only would this increase a martial practitioner's overall level of power; at the same time, it also helped in concurrently increasing and accumulating their own understanding of the martial dao.

At their level, how to grasp that balance and allocate their time appropriately was something that most of them had a good idea of within their hearts.

It was like this for all the Martial Grandmasters of Broad Creed Mountain, with Shi Tie as the sole exception.

When he was young and his cultivation low, he had devoted his foundation to a single martial art.

When his cultivation was higher, he still only cultivated in the Vajra Body of the Eight Extreme Arts.

He had cultivated in it for over a hundred years!

Through all the storms that he had experienced, from a young disciple of Broad Creed Mountain to one of the clan's bigwigs as he

was now, he had only cultivated in this one martial art.

In terms of strength, Yan Zhaoge's father, Yan Di, was superior to his senior apprentice-brother Shi Tie.

He was familiar with all of the Eight Extreme Arts, one of the only four of the current Broad Creed Mountain who had achieved this.

However, in terms of attainment in the Vajra Body, against Shi Tie, Yan Di could only sigh and admit his inferiority.

In terms of his attainment in this martial art, Shi Tie had long since surpassed the entire past generations of Broad Creed Mountain, the undisputed first person from ancient times till now.

Under his unflagging efforts, constantly experimenting as he removed its impurities while preserving its vital essence, discarding the old for the new, the Vajra body had been constantly improving, surpassing how it had been in the past.

In the past, the Eight Extreme Arts had stood side by side together.

Now, it was Eight Extreme Arts, Vajra Number One.

This reputation, had been single-handedly brought about by Shi Tie.

His face expressionless, after having captured Han Sheng and that one-eyed Elder, Shi Tie descended from the sky, coming to land before Yan Zhaoge and the others.

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “I have troubled eldest apprentice-uncle.”

Shi Tie nodded, “It was only made possible by your courage, though. Zhaoge, very well done indeed.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, his expression calm, as Xu Chuan silently bit his tongue in astonishment from the side.

Shi Tie’s reputation had long spread as someone who seldom gave out words of praise. Being able to receive an evaluation of ‘not bad’ from him was already extremely rare. This ‘well done’ that he had just bestowed upon Yan Zhaoge would then be as hard to come by as phoenix feathers or the horn of a unicorn.

“Let’s leave this place first. The news that I’ve reached the Eastern Tang cannot be leaked,” Shi Tie said.

Yan Zhaoge nodded, “This is only natural.”

Shi Tie swivelled his head to look at the emaciated Elder of Broad Creed Mountain, “I will be troubling Elder Yin to watch over the other disciples of our clan as well as the group led by the Eastern Tang’s First Prince.”

The surprised expression already gone from his face, the emaciated Elder did not ask any questions as he nodded his assent, “Just leave it to this old man.”

They immediately left.

Shi Tie and Yan Zhaoge, however, did not immediately set off. Shi Tie’s gaze was fixed on a spot far off into the distance, “Yan Xu, what do you have to say for yourself?”

The horizon suddenly lit up with a glazed golden light, as something like a barrier appeared all around that completely cut off the outside world from the inside.

Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu were carried along by Shi Tie as with a few strides, they arrived at the periphery of the barrier.

This barrier was formed of an application of Shi Tie’s powerful Vajra Body martial art. Before, it had been kept completely formless, preventing others from noticing it.

While blocking experts of the same cultivation level was not possible, having enveloped the entire surrounding area, even if the Ghost Hatchet Elder Han Sheng as well as the one-eyed Sacred Sun Clan Elder had managed to break free, they would then have collided with this barrier head-on and have their paths obstructed.

Currently, there was someone being obstructed by this barrier, only able to awkwardly stand where he was, neither able to move

forward or retreat.

That person was precisely Yan Xu.

Earlier, he had not neared, only observing the disturbance here from a long distance away.

If Yan Zhaoge's group had died at the hands of Han Sheng and that expert of the Sacred Sun Clan, it would have been the best case scenario for him.

If Yan Zhaoge, blessed with great luck, had somehow managed to break free, he might have been forced to make a move himself.

But seeing Shi Tie enter the fray, Yan Xu's heart had instantly sunk greatly.

As compared to in his predictions, Shi Tie had arrived much too early!

Seeing that things were not good, Yan Xu had immediately turned to run.

Only to realise that Shi Tie's fist intent had long since enveloped the entire area, restricting the heavens and the earth. It wasn't just Han Sheng and that Sacred Sun Clan Elder, even the Yan Xu who had not shown himself earlier had long since been trapped like a turtle within a jar.

He was suppressed and rendered immobile by Shi Tie's fist intent, wanting to escape but unable to do so, wanting to reveal himself on his own to try to cover up what he had done yet unable to do even that.

His entire person frozen there, it was awkward to the extreme.

HSSB 90: Elder Yan, Long Time No See

As he and Shi Tie came before Yan Xu, Yan Zhaoge said smilingly, “Elder Yan, long time no see.”

Shi Tie glanced indifferently at Yan Xu, “Let’s talk as we walk.”

They began walking, Yan Xu following silently behind Shi Tie, not uttering a sound.

A Martial Grandmaster of the Sacred Sun Clan having disappeared without a trace was an abnormal thing which would inevitably rouse one’s suspicions.

Whilst not wanting to expose his own identity as well as cultivation base, Shi Tie specially left behind some marks for the Sacred Sun Clan’s people to follow up on.

On the surface, these marks depicted not just one Martial Grandmaster of a similar cultivation level to that one-eyed Elder surrounding and attacking him.

On one hand, this concealed Shi Tie’s own arrival. On the other, bait was left dangling with which to hook the large fish.

Shi Tie looked at the Ghost Hatchet Elder, Han Sheng, “Han Sheng, you joined the Decimating Abyss organisation, creating a disturbance in Hell. That is abominable indeed.”

The Ghost Hatchet Elder said hatefully, “The human realm is just like a living hell; what difference is there?”

“Why is it that the lot of you can stand over others so loftily? It is only because you are stronger.”

“Hell shall open and the Nine Underworlds shall descend, tearing apart this world that we live in now and creating a new heaven and earth. At that time, we’ll see again who is the one who dictates!”

Han Sheng shouted angrily, “Having fallen in your hands this time, this old man has nothing to say. Still, Shi Tie and your bunch-don’t be too happy. This matter isn’t over yet!”

Shi Tie said calmly, “While Hell has temporarily calmed, we can also imagine that you won’t lay down your flags and cease beating your drums just like that.”

“Your moving this time-was it a portent?”

Han Sheng laughed coldly, shutting his mouth and simply giving up his struggle as he closed his eyes and stayed still, not moving an inch.

Yan Zhaoge suddenly said, “You want a certain something that I have on me, right?”

Shi Tie looked at Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge returned him a look to set his mind at rest before pulling out an object and shaking it a little in front of Han Sheng.

It was precisely the small metal plate that he had gotten from Ye Jing, which was related to the legacy of the Glacial Dragon Martial Saint.

From Yan Zhaoge's perspective, Han Sheng's expression did not change in the slightest, his gaze not shaking whatsoever as his breathing and heartbeat were also as normal.

The gaze with which he looked at him was filled with disdain as well as baffled incomprehension.

But the gaze of the Shi Tie beside him suddenly turned severe, "Oh?"

His cultivation being far above Han Sheng's, also currently imprisoning him with his own power, he could clearly feel the fluctuations of Han Sheng's emotions, having changed at this very moment.

Seeing this, Yan Zhaoge smiled, though he did not speak.

Shi Tie similarly stared at Han Sheng. Seeing this, Han Sheng snorted, continuing to remain silent, just that his bluster instantly fell.

Yan Zhaoge threw up the small metal plate within his palm. The metal plate rose into mid-air before falling downwards once more, as Yan Zhaoge caught it once again.

“The sinister shadow with which you caused a disturbance in the Sealing Dragon Abyss had nothing unique about it. It also hasn’t been in my hands for a long time.”

“Other than that, the two of have not had any other form of contact.”

“If you must say that there is something, then there is my fellow disciple, your...en, sworn brother, Ye Jing.”

Yan Zhaoge stroked that small metal plate with his fingers, “And the only thing that I obtained from junior apprentice-brother Ye Jing was this small metal plate. Therefore, I could only believe that the thing you wanted to obtain from me was just it.”

“So, Senior Han, is convenient for you to tell us now what you want this thing for?”

Yan Zhaoge looked at Han Sheng, “It is related to the Glacial Dragon Martial Saint, but just how large of a connection it is and how much of his legacy can be obtained is still an unknown.

“In the lands of the Eastern Tang right now, my Broad Creed Mountain, the Sacred Sun Clan as well as Infinite Boundless Mountain have all converged here in a gathering of heroes. In

having caused a disturbance in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, you would be the target of all; no one would mind taking care of you.”

“Under such circumstances, you still dared to take the incomparably huge risk of appearing.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “Let me guess. The only reason for that is that you must have obtained some precise information related to this metal plate. With it, you would be able to get something that would take you a step further in accomplishing that so-called grand wish of yours.”

“That thing is related to Hell, and can assist you and your companions in completing your plans?”

Hearing these words, Han Sheng directly shut his eyes, only opening his mouth to speak after a long time, “This old man’s skills were inferior, getting captured by you lot. I have nothing more to say.”

Yan Zhaoge swivelled his head to look at Shi Tie, “Eldest apprentice-uncle, originally, this was only an uncertain stroke of fortune that I came across by chance; therefore, I claimed possession of it. Now, however, it seems like it is extremely significant indeed.”

Broad Creed Mountain allowed its disciples to fully benefit from the fortuitous encounters that they experienced. If its disciples felt that they could not handle things on their own, they could also request assistance from the clan, sharing the benefits together.

However, if the matter concerned something like the Flame Devil World, Hell or some other Sacred Ground, it would be a different story altogether.

Shi Tie said, "It's fine; let's leave it for after everything has been settled."

"If it is related to the Decimating Abyss organisation and Hell, the clan will take care of it. If it is related to the Glacial Dragon Martial Saint, the clan won't take what is rightfully yours."

The Decimating Abyss organisation was naturally the organisation that the Ghost Hatchet Elder, Han Sheng was in.

Earlier, in a cleanup operation in the Eastern Tang, some mid and low-ranking members of the organisation had fallen into the net. To date, Han Sheng was the strongest expert of said organisation to have been captured.

Whether it was Yan Zhaoge or Shi Tie, both of them had great expectations about this, being prepared to pry open Han Sheng's mouth and unearth a lot more valuable information.

Shi Tie said, "This time, you were willing to take a risk; the final, eventual results of the operation aside, at the very least, Han Sheng has fallen into our net. The meaning of this is significant. With that, you have already earned a great merit."

“In first rescuing King Zhao of the Eastern Tang Kingdom, then helping him to wrest back control of the Jingyang Grand Formation later on, your contributions are similarly something that cannot be disputed.”

“In the midst of a battle, if the enemy does not die, it very well might be you yourself who dies. You killing Xiao Shen, cannot be considered a fault.”

As he looked at Yan Zhaoge, a few hints of warmth surfaced within Shi Tie’s usually tough, unyielding gaze, “At present, you have already earned three great merits; the clan will not fail to reward you for them.”

“Thinking about it, having been in the Eastern Tang for not even half a year, you have already consecutively performed many great merits, your contributions also being extremely outstanding. Such a frequency as well as efficiency is something that I have never encountered before in my years at the head of the Disciplinary Hall.”

Yan Zhaoge said, “Eldest apprentice-uncle overpraises me.”

“False words are not said before the true. This time, the Ghost Hatchet Elder having landed in our net was an unexpected surprise.”

As Yan Zhaoge said this, the corners of his mouth slightly lifted, “Besides, things having gone so smoothly must also be attributed to the fine coordination of others.”

Shi Tie said mildly, “Indeed, the coordination was very good.”

Both of their gazes now came to fall on Yan Xu.

Yan Zhaoge spread out his palms in a questioning pose, “Elder Yan, from what I know, due to hurrying over to assist Zhao Sheng, you shouldn’t have the time to be here, isn’t it?”

At this moment, Yan Xu had already completely calmed himself down in both mind and expression, “After having saved the Eastern Tang’s Third Prince, this old man rushed over here as quickly as he could, sadly arriving a step too late.”

He bowed towards Shi Tie, “Luckily, Elder Shi and other experts of the clan managed to rush over in time, defeating the Sacred Sun Clan as well as Old Monster Han.”

Shi Tie stared straight at Yan Xu, “Seeing that I was here, why did you run?”

Yan Xu said slowly, “This subordinate was incompetent, having failed in properly determining the movements of the enemy, in effect allowing the Sacred Sun Clan to run rampant unchecked on the lands of the Heaven Domain governed by my Broad Creed Mountain.”

“My Broad Creed Mountain’s reinforcements lagging after the martial practitioners of the Sacred Sun Clan in terms of

deployment, this subordinate bears a responsibility that cannot be denied.”

“This subordinate was originally already uneasy. Upon suddenly seeing Elder Shi, this subordinate got even more ashamed and panicked, not being able to resist concealing myself and leaving.”

“On one hand, this ashamed subordinate had no face to meet you. On the other, this subordinate wanted to quickly make up for my past faults and rush my men in quickly gathering some more information on the Sacred Sun Clan’s movements, in preparation for our clan’s counterattack.”

Yan Xu gave Shi Tie a full, deep bow, “This subordinate failed in handling matters, being mediocre and incompetent. I am willing to accept all the punishment that is meted out on me.”

Looking at Yan Xu, Yan Zhaoge thought that this was really a smooth old man indeed.

Seizing the initiative to admit a smaller fault whilst completely talking away the real, major issue.

What bothered Shi Tie the most in his life were people who failed in their tasks and attempted to talk away their responsibilities. Yan Xu’s words would inevitably cause Shi Tie’s opinion of him to be extremely low.

Even if he was temporarily left unpunished due to them having

to deal with the Sacred Sun Clan, Yan Xu would definitely not have it good after everything was over.

But when compared to Yan Xu's true intentions, these faults of his no longer seemed like anything.

It was only that, Shi Tie was not so easy to fool.

“You’ve brought along a Shadow Shrinking Pouch with you, inside which I can vaguely sense the presence of a living person,” Shi Tie stared at Yan Xu, “Who is it?”

HSSB 91: Direct Confrontation!

The Shadow Shrinking Pouch was a unique treasure, not amongst the ranks of artifacts or spirit artifacts.

Its materials were extremely hard to come by and its production was also not easy. Therefore, it was extremely rarely seen in the Eight Extremities World.

Retrieving the surrounding households of a thousand li from within a pouch-its meaning was similar to that of an infinite world being contained within a mustard seed.

The Shadow Shrinking Pouch contained a large self-formed space within, being able to accommodate a large amount of things, also allowing living beings to temporarily reside within.

As Shi Tie's cultivation was high and his senses extremely acute, while Yan Xu tried his best to hide it from him, he was still found out.

“While this subordinate was rushing over here, he happened to discover a disciple of our clan who had gone missing earlier-Ye Jing,” Yan Xu's expression was as usual as he said candidly, “At that time, he had already lapsed into unconsciousness. Thus, this subordinate saved him. Because I was in a rush to get over here and assist, I didn't dare to waste any time, therefore temporarily settling him within the Shadow Shrinking Pouch.

As he said thus, Yan Xu took out a small pouch.

This pouch was black in colour, a golden rope tied around its opening, its exterior not betraying any signs of its uniqueness at all.

But as Yan Xu untied the golden rope and the pouch opened, a golden qi flow instantly gushed out from within.

Accompanied by the golden qi flow, a figure appeared before the eyes of Yan Zhaoge and the others.

Yan Zhaoge began laughing soundlessly. Currently still unconscious, revealed on the back of that person's hands outside of his sleeves as well as his face and neck, were flamelike patterns.

Who was it if not Ye Jing?

Shi Tie's gaze fell on Ye Jing. While his gaze merely swept past the latter once, Ye Jing instantly awakened slowly.

The Ye Jing who had just woken up initially had a blurry look on his face, but he quickly regained his mental faculties as he observed his surroundings warily.

When he saw Yan Zhaoge, his eyes instantly turned red as blood as though there were flames blazing within, a 'boom' sound resounding as he was about to leap off from the ground.

Shi Tie knit his brows slightly. Without any visible movement of his, Ye Jing was instantly frozen on the spot, unable to move. He could only stick up his neck, staring furiously at Yan Zhaoge.

“My name is Shi Tie. As a disciple of our clan, you should know who I am,” Shi Tie said calmly, “I am the First Seat of our clan’s Disciplinary Hall, in charge of the law as well as punishment in our clan.”

“If you believe that you have suffered an injustice, you can lay it all out on the table before me now. If logic lies with you, I will not let you be wronged.”

Heaving out deep breaths, Ye Jing glared at Shi Tie, exclaiming loudly, “The people of Broad Creed Mountain, are all in cahoots with the Yan father and son!”

“His father is a First Seat Elder just like you; how can you not show favouritism towards him and uphold justice for me instead, offending his father in the process!”

Staying silent by the side, as Yan Xu saw Ye Jing’s reaction, he could not help but secretly shake his head, “If this weren’t Elder Shi, just that attitude of yours would have first got them offended.”

As Yan Xu had expected, Shi Tie paid no heed to Ye Jing’s attitude at all.

With seemingly no fluctuations in his tone whatsoever, he said, “I will not offend junior apprentice-brother Yan for you or for anyone else, but for the sake of upholding justice for our clan, for the sake of upholding justice in the hearts of men, I do not mind offending anyone.”

“Yes, I watched Zhaoge growing up, but it is precisely because of that even more so, I would not be able to tolerate him straying off the path.”

“But if it is determined that he has been falsely accused and framed, that person will be treated as though he had performed the same crime.”

Shi Tie said calmly, “I, only look at the truth of a matter.”

As he stood there calmly, his aura was as heavy as the mountains, as deep as the sea, as Ye Jing was intimidated back into silence.

While those words were said in a peaceful manner, each of them seemed like they weighed a thousand kilograms, beating down on the hearts of everyone present.

Ye Jing sucked in a deep breath, staring at Yan Zhaoge angrily, “That year, when I had still yet to enter the clan, he came to the Eastern Tang and stole away my lover whom I grown up together with since young!”

“Afterwards, when I entered Broad Creed Mountain, he viewed

me as a thorn in his flesh.”

“Previously in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, he wanted to kill me, yet did not want to leave any traces of his misdeeds behind. Thus he devised a cunning scheme, wanting to make use of another to kill me, cutting off the grass directly by its roots!”

“Failing in his first scheme, he devised yet another, throwing his Internal Crystal Furnace into the Sealing Dragon Abyss in an attempt to ensure my death!”

“I was lucky, and managed to survive. But in the Glacial Dragon Icy Pond, he tried to kill me yet again!”

“Harming me time and time again; it is impossible for us to exist together under these same heavens!”

Yan Zhaoge stood calmly by the side, neither happiness nor anger in his gaze which was currently on Ye Jing.

Shi Tie looked over, “Zhaoge, what have you to say?”

Yan Zhaoge said calmly, “That year, it was junior apprentice-sister Lin herself who made a choice. I did not break up the two of them on my own accord.”

“That time with the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul, it was because he couldn’t tell right from wrong and heavily injured our fellow disciple, junior apprentice-brother Lan, that I gave him a lesson;

that was indeed intentional on my part.”

“As for previously in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, I handed over a detailed report to the clan-I believe you, eldest apprentice-uncle, should have seen it too.”

Shi Tie nodded, as Yan Zhaoge continued, “The person whom the Crimson Spirit Flag Master wanted to kill was me; I had no way to predict or manipulate his actions.”

“Even if I had known of it beforehand, the Crimson Spirit Flag Master had depended on the seed of Li Yan True Fire to determine our position in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, hereby setting up his trap...” Yan Zhaoge looked towards Ye Jing, “You snatching the seed of Li Yan True Fire, was not something that I could have predicted or manipulated.”

“That you were interested in my goal, the seed of Li Yan True Fire, I had been completely unaware of-how then could I have schemed against you?”

As Ye Jing stared at Yan Zhaoge, his breathing getting heavier and heavier by the second, Yan Zhaoge shook his head, “Of course, I do not deny that if the incident with the Crimson Spirit Flag Master had not happened, I would have taught you a lesson to get you to behave more sensibly afterwards.”

“However, at that time, there was no reason for me to kill you at all-you were simply not worthy.”

Ye Jing momentarily stopped his breathing, the flames of anger within his gaze instantly blazing even more strongly than before.

Yan Zhaoge calmly met his gaze, his own gaze having gradually become cold as ice, “As for when you fell into the Sealing Dragon Abyss afterwards, that’s simple. The two of us can just perform a Blood Soul Recollection Ceremony.”

“Playing back the scene of what happened then, with eldest-apprentice uncle as the judge.”

“I don’t mind at all-do you dare?”

The words immediately shot of Ye Jing’s mouth, “Do it then!”

Yan Zhaoge shrugged, turning and bowing towards Shi Tie, “Eldest apprentice-uncle, please.”

Shi Tie did not say anything, directly flicking out with his finger as a streak of light flew up into the horizon, forming a light pillar within the sky, completely enveloping Yan Zhaoge and Ye Jing within.

Yan Zhaoge punctured his own finger neither hurriedly nor slowly. A little fresh blood dripped out, forming a line of blood that flew up into the sky.

Led by that line of blood, Yan Zhaoge vaguely felt as though his soul had left his body and ascended to a higher realm.

On the other side, under Shi Tie's guidance, Ye Jing did the same.

Shi Tie said, "Silently think back on that instant within your heart, not focusing on what you saw, but rather calibrating to return to the scene of that time."

"The ceremony will naturally get rid of the falsehoods caused by the influence of your personal emotions, as well as resurface the truths that you intentionally overlooked."

The next moment, in the sky above their heads, a mirror of light slowly descended.

Within the mirror of light, images were impressively being played out that accurately displayed the past events of the Sealing Dragon Abyss once more.

Yan Zhaoge's expression did not change.

Yan Xu shook his head slightly.

Ye Jing's eyes became even more bloodshot.

Shi Tie was focused on that terrifying aura that had surged up from the dark red ring worn by Ye Jing as well as that giant illusory figure of flame behind him as he momentarily fell into a

slight trance.

After a moment, Ye Jing regained his wits, letting out an enraged howl, “Fraud, trickery, deceit! As I thought, you are indeed the same kind of person as Lan Wenyan, Lin Yushao and the others, leaning towards and protecting this dog Yan Zhaoge!”

“It was definitely that he intentionally threw down that Internal Crystal Furnace to do me in!”

Shi Tie’s expression gradually turned stern as with a sweep of his gaze, Ye Jing was pressured to the point where he was completely unable to move.

“The Blood Soul Recollection Ceremony can indeed be falsified,” Shi Tie said quietly, “But there is only one way that can be done, and that is when both parties had colluded to do this beforehand.”

“Ye Jing, did you collude with Zhaoge to reproduce a false scene?”

Hearing his words, Ye Jing was left staring wide-eyed, speechless tongue-tied as he breathed out heavily, the fiery light within his eyes growing stronger and stronger, all traces of reason and clarity having already vanished from within.

The flamelike patterns on his body grew even more dazzling as they looked as though they were going to erupt into real, blazing flames.

Looking at him calmly, Yan Zhaoge suddenly asked, “Ye Jing, how did junior apprentice-sister Lin die?”

HSSB 92: Now, What Do You Have To Say For Yourself?

Yan Zhaoge looked at Ye Jing who had the look of wanting to devour everybody he saw.

After hearing his question, complicated emotions now surfaced within Ye Jing's eyes which had originally been on the verge of losing all sense of reason.

Anger, regret, unwillingness, longing, hatred, disgust-all of these flashed by.

But all these emotions were quickly engulfed and swallowed up by his flames of fury.

Ye Jing ground his teeth, staring at Yan Zhaoge while not answering his question, only repeating non-stop, "Because of you... because of you...it was all because of you!"

Seeing this from the side, Yan Xu's expression did not change, but disappointment that was hard to conceal could be seen within the depths of his gaze, "Rotten mud cannot be lifted up a wall."

Upon having successfully sought out Ye Jing earlier, he had not revealed his own identity, only telling Ye Jing that he could help him in getting his revenge.

All he needed was Ye Jing to coordinate with him.

The Ghost Hatchet Elder Han Sheng, had also been led over by Ye Jing. That Han Sheng would make a move, to Yan Xu, was an unexpected surprise.

Yan Zhaoge dying at Han Sheng's hands and Han Sheng being killed by Broad Creed Mountain experts afterwards in retaliation to him, that was a perfect best case scenario indeed.

If he had to personally make a move to exterminate Yan Zhaoge, Ye Jing would also be of use then.

But from the looks of it now, Ye Jing was completely useless in all areas. He had definitely taught him to push the blame for Lin Yushao's death onto Yan Zhaoge...

But the Ye Jing who had had the flames of fury rush into his brain didn't seem to think that that was a good idea at all.

As he saw it, why did he have to frame Yan Zhaoge?

Everything that had happened up till now was all caused by Yan Zhaoge in the first place!

Looking at Ye Jing, Yan Xu strongly shook his head within his heart.

People who had lost their rationality were indeed easy to manipulate, but such people were also prone to easily losing control of their emotions, leading to some unexpected accidents happening.

The Principal Elder of the Eastern Tang, now deeply felt the frustration of having a pig teammate.

Looking at how Ye Jing was, Shi Tie also shook his head within his heart.

Affected by the technique with which he had reforged his fleshly body, Ye Jing's emotions had become greatly unstable, temperamental and quick to anger, unable to keep a calm mind.

He really didn't understand what had really happened that day in the Sealing Dragon Abyss?

Maybe not; more probable was the fact that he just wasn't willing to believe it.

At the end of the day, it was him being unwilling to accept reality, feeling that he should not have met with such a calamity for no rhyme or reason, and especially not in front of Yan Zhaoge.

Having met with such a calamity, there must definitely be someone who had perpetrated it, and other than the Yan Zhaoge whom he had originally had some enmity with, what other, more possible candidate was there?

From a certain perspective, it was actually just him being enraged as a result, and wanting to find an outlet to vent his anger.

Afterwards, he began feeling that as the victim, he definitely couldn't lower his head before the perpetrator, and had to get justice for himself, paying back what he had suffered in fold.

It was just that with this process of continual self-hypnosis, Ye Jing's emotions had grown more and more unstable.

More and more temperamental, the violent intent in his heart skyrocketing even further.

From first thinking of himself as the victim, to accumulating his rage gradually to the point where it brought harm to those around him, as he became more and more unrestrained and without fear.

Shi Tie was a person who seldom felt regret, but now he was really beginning to question a little: the Ye Jing before his eyes-was he really the person he had previously set his eyes on and considered taking on as a disciple after observation?

All of Ye Jing's reactions after having heard Yan Zhaoge's question had fallen into his eyes, and he had naturally understood that Ye Jing's so-called 'because of you' stemmed out of anger and resentment, rather than pointing at Yan Zhaoge as a real murderer.

Staring at Yan Zhaoge, Ye Jing hissed, “If she had not been bewitched by you, how could Yushao have been unwilling to leave with me?”

Yan Zhaoge came before him, gazing at him, “Unwilling to leave with you; so you were determined not to let her leave with me as well?”

Ye Jing snorted, his eyes bloodshot as reason and clarity had once again completely vanished from within them, “Anyone who is standing on your side, is my enemy!”

Looking at him, Yan Zhaoge’s tone was calm yet emitted a bone-chilling coldness, “Very good; prepare to pay with your life for junior apprentice-sister Lin.”

Ye Jing let out an enraged yell, “You are not allowed to mention her; if not for you that year, none of this would have happened!”

Yan Zhaoge paid him no heed any longer, instead looking towards Yan Xu, “Ye Jing, does not know the Tushita Palm.”

“Although what he is currently cultivating in is very strange, the power of fire that it contains is very different from with the Tushita Palm.”

“Elder Yan, the one who first discovered junior apprentice-sister Lin’s corpse was you. I would like to ask of you: the injuries on junior apprentice-sister Lin’s body left behind by the Tushita

Palm-who inflicted them?”

Shi Tie's gaze similarly came to fall on Yan Xu.

With both Yan Zhaoge's and Shi Tie's gazes on him, Yan Xu fell silent for a moment before he raised his eyelids, his gaze calm, “It was this old man.”

He said slowly, “With the competition between Elder Yan and Elder Fang growing more and more intense by the day, this old man was momentarily bewitched by the devil, intending to strike a blow on Elder Yan through Yan Zhaoge.”

“If Yan Zhaoge were found guilty of the crime, let alone the fact that he would have lost all face, Elder Yan would also have earned the reputation of being an incompetent father.”

“And such a person-how could he succeed the position of Clan Chief?”

Yan Xu calmly whispered, “And so, the old Clan Chief, you, Elder Shi, as well as the other important experts of our clan-your impressions of the Yan father and son would all drop greatly as a result.”

“Elder Fang's road to power would become much smoother.”

“As remuneration for it in the future, this old man would also receive many benefits.”

“This was being fuelled by greed-my first sin.”

“Other than that, as a mere junior, Yan Zhaoge went against this old man time and time again, causing this old man to be holding in a stomach full of resentment, feeling uncomfortable if I couldn’t vent it out. Therefore, I intentionally wanted to make things difficult for him, to teach him a lesson.”

“This was being fuelled by anger-my second sin.”

Yan Xu’s tone was calm and without fluctuations, “While being a Principal Elder, this old man has committed so many grave sins. I am willing to resign my post and head to the Disciplinary Hall to receive my punishment.”

“Whatever punishment the clan decides to give me, this old man will also not object.”

“With our Broad Creed Mountain currently battling it out with the Sacred Sun Clan, this old man’s face is also not thick enough to continue remaining in the Eastern Tang. I plead to head to the frontlines where the South Heaven Region and the Fire Domain are doing battle, to fight it out with our enemies.”

“If this old life is thrown away there, it can be considered as having made up for this time’s sins. I hope Elder Shi will allow me this.”

Shi Tie looked at him silently, neither agreeing nor refusing, not saying a word.

Looking at Yan Xu, Yan Zhaoge asked, “Elder Yan, is it only that?”

Yan Xu said mildly, “Admitting my wrongs in front of a junior like you, the skin on this old man’s old face has already been completely peeled away. What else is there to hide?”

Yan Zhaoge chortled, though his gaze was a little cold, “Elder Yan’s skill of grabbing the big and letting go of the small is something that is deeply worthy of me learning.”

“However, I would like to ask of you how the movements of myself along with Elder Xu and the others came to be grasped by the Sacred Sun Clan.”

Yan Xu’s expression did not change, “This old man is also very curious about that.”

He looked at Yan Zhaoge, “Are you hinting that this old man intentionally leaked the information to the Sacred Sun Clan, attempting to kill with a borrowed knife and condemn you to death?”

“This old man admits that on your matter, I indeed showed little forbearance. However, it was still not to the extent of wanting your life-this old man had no reason to wish you dead.”

“As for this old man appearing here, I have already said that it was because I had rushed over to assist.”

Yan Xu looked at Yan Zhaoge, “You said that this old man wanted to claim your life; that really is ‘if you want to condemn someone, there’s always a charge to be had.’”

Yan Zhaoge sneered, “What’s true is ‘The evidence is irrefutable; it cannot be denied.’”

Looking at Yan Xu, Shi Tie slowly shook his head, “Elder Yan, seeing me appear here, were you still holding on to hope?”

Yan Xu’s expression didn’t change, but his heart sunk.

Shi Tie similarly didn’t say anything further, only bringing all of them to pierce through the clouds as he flew. Very quickly, they arrived at a manor.

Seeing this manor, Yan Xu’s face instantly dimmed slightly.

Outside the manor, there stood a hale and hearty old man.

It was precisely the Disciplinary Elder of the East Heaven Region who had paid a visit to the Eastern Tang for Yan Zhaoge half a year ago.

The Disciplinary Elder bowed towards Shi Tie, “First Seat, when we arrived here, they were in the process of silencing mouths. Two people could not be saved.”

“However, the others have all already fallen under our control. After our primary interrogation, it is already sufficient to indict Yan Xu of colluding with the Sacred Sun Clan and exposing the movements of our clan’s disciples.”

Shi Tie landed, turning to look at Yan Xu, “Now, what do you have to say for yourself?”

HSSB 93: Throwing Dirty Water, I Can Too

Yan Xu naturally couldn't contact the Sacred Sun Clan himself.

Otherwise, he would be giving the Sacred Sun Clan a hold over himself. How then would he be able to stay on in Broad Creed Mountain in the future?

Still, being a Martial Grandmaster itself was already Yan Xu's greatest leverage.

Having been a Principal Elder, he also grasped quite a lot of information.

But unless there was really no other choice, Yan Xu definitely wouldn't think of betraying his own clan and seeking asylum in the Sacred Sun Clan.

The foundation that he had built up would be completely lost, and all his resources and connections would have to be built up from scratch once again.

Arriving in the Sacred Sun Clan as someone who had entered from outside, even if the other party, prioritising good talent, treated him well, there would be no hope of him ever truly entering their core circle.

Thus, in sending over information to the Sacred Sun Clan, Yan Xu had gone through quite a few measures in order to prevent his

own identity from being discovered.

Even the Sacred Sun Clan who had received his information would be hard pressed to trace it back to him.

Therefore, even if he had to directly stand against that Elder of the Sacred Sun Clan whom Shi Tie had captured, Yan Xu still wouldn't be worried in the least.

Though, at the end of the day, all this still had to be carried out through Yan Xu's most trusted subordinates.

This manor was Yan Xu's own secret property but still had not managed to elude Shi Tie in the end.

Facing the sky, Yan Xu let out a long sigh. Since Shi Tie had unexpectedly appeared in the Eastern Tang, he already felt that it would be hard for him to get away this time. Still, he held on to hope, not willing to dismiss that slight possibility of making it through relatively unscathed.

As long as he was not killed by Shi Tie on the spot or imprisoned in the Heaven Sealing Gorge, there would still be hope for him.

The crimes of colluding with the Sacred Sun Clan and attempting to kill with a borrowed knife were left unproven, and the mere crime of planting evidence and framing Yan Zhaoge due to factional conflict was something that he still could survive being convicted of.

While he would definitely be removed from his post as a Principal Elder, he would most likely be given the chance to redeem his sins on the battlefield.

At that time, he would have a chance to escape.

He already held no hope of rising up once more in Broad Creed Mountain. At most, he would really have to betray Broad Creed Mountain for the Sacred Sun Clan.

But now, even that hope had been extinguished.

Yan Xu looked at Yan Zhaoge, his gaze deep and distant. At this moment, there was no way he could not have understood that Shi Tie's unexpected appearance was definitely Yan Zhaoge's work.

While he had been fixated on Yan Zhaoge, Yan Zhaoge had also been fixated on him!

He had specifically dug a great big hole and waited for him to jump into it on his own, falling to the point of eternal damnation!

Shi Tie looked at Yan Xu. "I too do not understand why you want Yan Zhaoge dead, and why you dragged Xu Chuan and the others as well as those from the Eastern Tang into this mess as well."

"Is your foresight so lacking and your vision near-sighted to this

extent? Or are there some other secrets behind this?”

“Now, why don’t you tell us why.”

“At this point in time, there really is no further point for you to try to hide anything.”

Under Shi Tie’s gaze, Yan Xu fell silent for a moment, only able to feel a dryness within his throat.

Looking at Yan Xu, Yan Zhaoge suddenly laughed. “Earlier, I had still been unable to understand why Elder Yan wants me dead.”

“But after having met with Ye Jing in person this time, I think that I understand it a little now.”

Yan Xu was stunned. He had only used Ye Jing as a knife. It had nothing to do with his personal motive at all.

At this moment, hearing Yan Zhaoge say this, a bad premonition suddenly surfaced within his heart.

Ye Jing was also brought over by Shi Tie. Over this period of time, he had been suppressed by Shi Tie, not able to move or say a word. He was only able to gaze hatefully and resentfully at them of Broad Creed Mountain.

At this moment, he still felt extremely surprised to hear that he

had something to do with Yan Xu. Even though he was not all that clear-headed, his gaze came unconsciously to fall on Yan Xu.

Shi Tie was surprised as well.

Shi Tie naturally harboured doubts about Yan Xu's testimony of having inadvertently come by an unconscious Ye Jing on the roadside.

But he did not believe that Yan Xu wanted Yan Zhaoge's life just to help Ye Jing vent his anger and take his revenge.

Everyone's attention came to fall on Yan Zhaoge.

Despite their attention all being on him, Yan Zhaoge was not flustered in the least. "From that Blood Soul Recollection Ceremony just now, everyone saw everything that happened previously in the Sealing Dragon Abyss."

"Regardless of the reason, Ye Jing's fleshly body was shattered, completely destroyed within the abyss."

"However, he had his fleshly body reforged. Such a technique is definitely not ordinary."

Everyone nodded simultaneously. The entire body completely shattered till only the soul was left, yet could still be successfully reforged-such a technique was indeed strange and unpredictable.

Coming before Ye Jing, Yan Zhaoge looked at him. “All of this originated from that ring of his, from that strange figure that suddenly erupted from within it.”

“In the Sealing Dragon Abyss, I had already found it strange, yet couldn’t confirm it. Thus, I didn’t continue thinking further about it.”

“But now, faced with the Ye Jing who obtained new life, the suspicions within my heart have grown even stronger.”

Yan Zhaoge swivelled his head to look at Shi Tie. “Eldest apprentice-uncle, you’ve personally encountered experts of the Flame Devils before. Did you find it familiar?”

As these words left his mouth, everyone was shocked.

Yan Xu’s entire body shuddered violently as he screamed, “While Ye Jing’s technique helped him to reforge a body of fire, it is different from the body of a Flame Devil!”

While Shi Tie’s gaze wavered slightly, he also nodded. “There are similarities, but they are not completely the same.”

Everyone else nodded. If Ye Jing’s body was really completely the same as those of the Flame Devils, they wouldn’t have been so calm and composed before.

Yan Zhaoge said, “The Flame Devils that everyone is commonly familiar with are indeed different. However, eldest-apprentice uncle, you should know our Eight Extremities World’s current conjectures on the origin of the Flame Devil world.”

Shi Tie’s gaze moved, a huge change surfacing for the first time in his expression that was normally sunken as tough as granite. “The Flame Devil Emperor?”

Yan Zhaoge nodded. “That’s right. The Flame Devil Emperor, also known as the Heavenly Fire Emperor, was an expert of the legends whose fame shook the world before the time of the Great Calamity, though no news of him was heard after the event.”

“Our Eight Extremities World’s current most mainstream conjecture on the origin of the Flame Devil World is that it was brought on by the legacy of the Flame Devil Emperor.”

“Just like how our own Eight Extremities World was formed with excavating the remnant legacies of the experts of before the Great Calamity as a basis, then unceasingly developed off of there.”

Yan Zhaoge said leisurely, “The current martial arts of our Broad Creed Mountain, and also the other Sacred Grounds like the Sacred Sun Clan and the Jade Sea City, in effect also all the other powers, are vastly different from before the Great Calamity, after having experienced so many years of development.”

“So many long years having passed, the power of the Flame Devils gained through their legacy must definitely also have

diverged from the direct lineage inheritance of the Flame Devil Emperor.”

Standing by the side, the Disciplinary Elder of the East Heaven Region had now already regained his wits as he asked in a low tone. “You meaning is... that the legacy that Ye Jing received from that ring, is the direct lineage inheritance of the Flame Devil Emperor?!”

“His legacy, completely preserved from before the Great Calamity?”

Yan Zhaoge smiled slightly as he concluded his thoughts. “This is just my personal conjecture. How much of it is true still awaits investigation and verification.”

“Other than that, is there any connection between Ye Jing and the current Flame Devil World? This also needs to be made clear...”

As Yan Zhaoge continued, he glanced at Yan Xu in a way that seemed intentional yet also unintentional at the same time. “...as well as why Elder Yan would help Ye Jing...”

Yan Xu’s face completely changed colour at this as he roared in anger, “A load of hogwash!”

However intense the conflict between Broad Creed Mountain and the Sacred Sun Clan, even if it were a full-out war, there would still

be the possibility of things calming down afterwards. Whereas anyone who was connected to the Flame Devils, the common enemy of the entire Eight Extremities World, definitely wouldn't have it good.

Flame Devils consumed other lifeforms' blood as meals and especially loved that of martial practitioners who had undergone cultivation!

Yan Zhaoge smiled, but did not speak.

Shi Tie said slowly, "The relationship between Yan Xu and Ye Jing is still not something that we can draw a conclusion on now, but Ye Jing's legacy very possibly has a connection with the Flame Devil Emperor."

Shi Tie's words caused everyone's hearts to grow cold.

He looked towards Ye Jing. "The scene depicted during the Blood Soul Recollection Ceremony of when Ye Jing's soul was taken in by that ring of his showed an incomparably strong aura being revealed."

"Even though we experienced it through the Blood Soul Recollection light rather than in person, I was able to feel how terrible and strong that aura was. From that, we can imagine how terrifying it would be if that thing really descended before us."

Shi Tie said with extreme certainty, "Comparing it with the

analysis of the historical records, even the Flame Devil King who died in that hands of Ancestor Heaven Shaker that year was not so terrifying!”

Everyone’s expressions turned grave. The Flame Devil King of that year was already the greatest expert of the Flame Devil World to have ever appeared in history.

Even more terrifying then him...

Yan Xu’s face turned green.

Although Shi Tie had not silently gone on and allowed Yan Zhaoge to connect him and Ye Jing together in this matter, the way things had progressed now was already far, far worse than the worst case scenario he had thought of before!

Yan Xu suddenly thought of his own trusted subordinate, Wen Ningzhi.

Looking at him, Yan Zhaoge curled his lips within his heart, “Throwing dirty water on someone else—I can do it too ah.”

HSSB 94: None Of Them Can Think Of Escaping!

Shi Tie said, “Whatever the truth of the matter, it is still not something that we can ascertain now. However, being related to the Flame Devils, we must investigate it thoroughly.”

“The importance of this matter is such that it is even more pressing than the matter of the Decimating Abyss organisation.”

While viewing the Blood Soul Recollection Ceremony earlier, upon seeing that powerful aura emanating from Ye Jing’s ring, Shi Tie had already secretly noted it down within his heart.

It was just that he was someone who did not jump to conclusions lightly. Therefore, he had only buried these queries of his within his heart.

Although the abnormalities in Hell were something that everyone had to guard against, at the end of the day, the danger it presented was still not all that significant.

The Flame Devils, however, were the Eight Extremities World’s longtime enemy, the two having clashed interminably all these long years, neither giving an inch to the other.

If Ye Jing had only obtained the Flame Devil Emperor’s legacy by chance, it would still be fine.

If he had a connection with the current Flame Devil World, it would be an extremely serious matter indeed.

While Shi Tie still hadn't completely made this matter conclusive, its importance within his heart had undoubtedly risen by a lot.

His face as black as a pot's bottom, Yan Xu squeezed out a few words from the slits between his teeth, "About this, this old man was completely not in the know!"

Yan Zhaoze said neither hurriedly or slowly, "Then I really can't think of any other reason why Elder Yan wants me dead so much."

Yan Xu snorted, a complicated expression appearing on his face.

Everyone was currently focused on Ye Jing, appraising him all over.

At this moment, though, Ye Jing was totally stumped.

The enraged and temperamental him, currently being the focus of everyone's gazes, naturally had an extremely uncomfortable feeling well up within him.

His understanding towards the situation of this entire world was still limited.

However, he was naturally still familiar with what kind of existences Flame Devils were.

At this moment, hearing himself actually being lumped together with them, he was instantly startled and angered.

As he looked over, Yan Zhaoge saw the patterns of flame on Ye Jing's entire body becoming more and more dazzling, as though his entire body was really going to spontaneously combust.

Ye Jing howled angrily, "Yan Zhaoge! Having ended up in your hands, whatever you want to do to me, if you want to kill me or cut me up, just do it if you think you can!"

"In order to put yourself on the side of reason, you still want to continue making up accusations about me! You, this dog who distorts the facts!"

Yan Zhaoge said carelessly, "You've also already said that you are currently a fish within a net, a turtle within a jar. If I take care of you, it'd also be because you deserve it."

"Why do I still need to make up accusations about you?"

"Perhaps you yourself are unaware, but verification won't be hard. After taking you back to the clan, whereupon our experts will analyse that ring of yours, a conclusion will naturally be made."

Yan Zhaoge looked calmly at Ye Jing, “Don’t have such an excessively high opinion of yourself. There are many things that I have to do; I’ve no time at all to waste on you.”

Ye Jing was even more enraged by this, the patterns of flame on his body dazzling with an unprecedented brightness.

Soon, true flames actually began blazing!

The Ye Jing within the flames surveyed his surroundings, glaring at Yan Zhaoge, Shi Tie, the Disciplinary Elder of the East Heaven Region and the others.

“As I thought, your Broad Creed Mountain people are all in cahoots, covering up for one another!”

“Peoples’ hearts are evil and treacherous, killing others without drawing blood, not spitting out bones from devouring others-you are even more vicious and malicious than the flame devils!”

“Being on the same team as people like you; I’d much rather be as refreshingly straightforward as the Flame Devils!”

Facing the sky, Ye Jing let out a crazed roar. On his hand, beneath his flesh and blood, a red light surfaced, forming a dark red circle of light that slotted himself on his finger. It was precisely that dark red ring.

The ring erupted with a dazzling light, an illusory scene being

faintly projected in the air behind him.

Within that illusion, the entire ground was covered by lava; the entire sky was engulfed by fire!

It was as though a terrifying giant of flame had appeared within it.

It was a powerful aura far from what Ye Jing could possess at his current level, sometimes visible, sometimes unseen, shocking peoples' hearts.

Seeing this, Yan Zhaoge instead rolled his eyes, "Your brains must really have been fried by the heat."

It was different from the illusory figure that they had viewed through the Blood Soul Recollection Ceremony earlier. At this moment, they all saw it for real.

Looking at the current Ye Jing and feeling the power held by that illusory figure, the spectators by the side, Yan Xu included, all began to mostly believe in Yan Zhaoge's earlier conjecture.

Seeing the dark red ring on Ye Jing's figure, Yan Xu thought, "So it had fused within his body; no wonder we were unable to detect it all along."

Shi Tie said expressionlessly, "At the base of it, it may be the strongest that this Shi has ever seen in my life; even exterminating

the entire Eight Extremities World might be a simple thing for it.”

“However, it cannot even be considered a remnant portion of soul or even some remnant will; only a sliver of its aura still remains. It still cannot overturn the heavens.”

Having said thus, Shi Tie extended a hand, that palm instantly transforming into a glassy, transparent state, a golden light being emanated from within, resembling Vajra.

As that one palm landed, Ye Jing and that illusory figure simultaneously let out screams of pain and rage.

As the light of the fire was instantly extinguished, Ye Jing was once again pinned down onto the ground, completely unable to move, only able to glare at Yan Zhaoge and Shi Tie with an unresigned expression on his face.

Originally about to speak, Shi Tie’s expression suddenly flickered slightly as with a single stride, he was already outside of the manor.

At this moment, outside the manor where the sun had originally been blazing strongly high overhead, the sunlight suddenly dimmed.

The sky turned dark, as though it had descended into night in an instant.

Within the darkness of the night, a bright moon was sometimes visible, sometimes not.

Shi Tie's entire body was enveloped in a glazed golden light that seemed ancient and inextinguishable as he faced off with the enemy.

Light and darkness clashed between the heavens and the earth, neither giving way to the other in the slightest, causing numerous raging waves to be formed which directly shook the foundation of the manor below it till it caved in and collapsed!

Faced with these shockwaves, the Disciplinary Elder of the East Heaven Region as well as the other Broad Creed Mountain experts also felt great pressure.

"Twilight Dark Moon!" The Disciplinary Elder let out a muffled groan, "This level of cultivation; it's the Twilight Lord of the Seven Reigning Suns!"

Yan Zhaoge stroked his lower chin, "As I remember, the Twilight Lord's cultivation is of a similar level to the World Illuminating Lord, the head of the Seven. His strength should be ranked second amongst them?"

The Disciplinary Elder nodded, "That's right; although his position is below the World Illuminating Lord's, his cultivation and strength are not inferior by much. He is a peak expert of the Sacred Sun Clan."

“Also, we know that of the Seven Reigning Suns, it is the Twilight Lord who is in charge of doing all the dirty as well as tedious work. While he usually keeps a low profile, he’s killed the most people.”

Yan Zhaoge chuckled, “They really think highly of me, huh. I’ve not killed off that Xiao Shen for nothing, then.”

The Twilight Dark Moon was the most unique of the Seven Great Sun Arts. It formed an independent domain of its own, turning black into white and day into night.

Fluctuating between real and illusionary, switching between sun and moon, something that was between illusionary and fist techniques, different from all of the Sacred Sun Clan’s other martial arts.

Currently, displayed by the Twilight Lord, it really had the power to alter the heavens and change the earth.

If not for the fact that Shi Tie stood there unyieldingly like an unmoving pillar, all those of Broad Creed Mountain here would have been instantly swallowed and engulfed by the moonlight.

“Iron Lion?” A low, deep voice resounded from within the moonlight.

Seeing the Twilight Lord blocked by Shi Tie, the other experts of the Sacred Sun Clan, concealed within the darkness of the night,

launched an attack on Yan Zhaoge and the others.

The Disciplinary Elder of the East Heaven Region as well as the other experts of Broad Creed Mountain immediately went up to meet them, as a new, chaotic battle erupted.

Now, the Yan Xu who had originally looked like he had meekly accepted his fate, suddenly erupted!

Directing a final glance full of hatred at Yan Zhaoge, he did not linger, instead quickly escaping into the distance.

Meanwhile, Ye Jing had also managed to get himself out of danger. While he actually wanted to go trouble Yan Zhaoge instead, he was unable to determine the latter's position within all this darkness. Letting out a crazed howl in hatred, he could only escape towards the outside.

From mid-air, Shi Tie let out a cold snort.

A glazed golden light suddenly lit up within the darkness, striking Yan Xu's body.

Currently in the midst of escaping, Yan Xu's entire body shuddered intensely as a mouthful of blood spurted uncontrollably out of his mouth.

Bright red blood leaked out from all the pores of his entire body, as his entire person now resembled a man of blood.

Still, with the bulk of Shi Tie's attention fixed upon the Twilight Lord of the Sacred Sun Clan, while Yan Xu had been heavily injured by his blow, he had still barely managed to preserve his own life.

Yan Xu didn't dare to hesitate in the slightest, as, struggling, he continued escaping into the distance.

Yan Zhaoge sent a sound transmission over to Shi Tie, "Eldest apprentice-uncle, leave it to me. I will look for him and Ye Jing."

Shi Tie hesitated slightly before replying, "If the other party resists, you may kill them on the spot."

"Eldest apprentice-uncle can rest easy."

As he quickly began to move, a cold smile was revealed on Yan Zhaoge's face, "None of them can think of escaping."

HSSB 95: Murderously Pursuing Ye Jing And Yan Xu!

The Sacred Sun Clan's Twilight Lord's attack had unleashed a Twilight Dark Moon domain that seemingly encompassed everything in all four directions.

Every single person within this domain would find themselves affected by the Twilight Dark Moon qi.

However, Shi Tie was no pushover either.

Faced with such a formidable opponent, the Twilight Lord was forced to put forth all of his strength into the fight without being able to spare any thought for other matters on the battlefield.

Due to this reason, the Broad Creed Mountain martial practitioners in the twilight domain were only minorly annoyed by it. It served to obstruct their sight, but was unable to do any physical harm to them.

For Yan Zhaoge, all he could see in any direction was a field of pitch black.

However, Yan Xu was also in a terrible situation. After receiving Shi Tie's attack, the golden light had permeated his body, constantly exacerbating his injuries.

Yan Xu lacked the strength to expel the foreign energy from his body, to the extent that the golden qi from Shi Tie's Vajra Body caused his own aura qi to be virtually ineffective.

The golden qi continued to circulate through Yan Xu's body and emit outwards through his qi points, making his body glow a brilliant golden color. This light was like a beacon signal for Yan Zhaoge.

As far as Ye Jing went, he was fleeing with his full strength. However, his current state was such that he was a fiery red like a bonfire, making him extremely eye catching within the Twilight Dark Moon domain.

The two were like fireflies on a dark night. In fact, they were so eye catching that it was hard to others to not be aware of their existence.

By coincidence, it just so happened that the two fled in the same direction.

This development meant that Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu did not need to split up and could keep chasing after the two together.

Yan Xu's original cultivation was that of a Martial Grandmaster, meaning that his speed should be incredibly fast – traversing thousands of kilometers with a single thought.

However, he had been injured so heavily by Shi Tie—to the

degree that he had almost died on the spot—that his speed had dropped dramatically below that of a Martial Grandmaster's.

Under the influence of his worsening injuries, the farther he ran, the slower his speed became.

The two continued to desperately flee until they finally broke out of the Twilight Dark Moon domain.

Ecstatic with the thought of his escape, Yan Xu's eyes lit up as he began to recover from his injuries. But recovering his sensory abilities, he instantly turned around as he felt the presence of his pursuers.

Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu had indeed chased him here, and were only a short distance away.

Quickly calculating, Yan Xu gloomily realized that continuing to flee like this would only result in him eventually being overtaken.

His eyes flashed as he thought of the possible outcomes of this encounter.

The pursuing Yan Zhaoge was only a short distance away when he saw the fleeing Yan Xu suddenly stop in his tracks, turn around, and charge straight at him.

Yan Xu's face was twisted with hatred, "Little child who still reeks of his mother's milk, since you are seeking death, let this old

man assist you!”

Ye Jing was also nearby, but his violent rage had caused his perception of his surroundings to dull somewhat.

He continued rushing forward until he faintly heard Yan Xu’s angry roar. It was only then that he turned around and realized that Yan Zhaoge had already caught up.

As soon as Ye Jing saw Yan Zhaoge, his pupils turned bloodshot and all else faded from his vision until only the Yan Zhaoge that he hated to his very core remained.

With a hate-filled howl, Ye Jing stopped, turned around, and flung himself towards Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge stared straight at the oncoming Yan Xu. Without betraying any panic whatsoever, he flourished his sleeve, causing a jade-colored light to fly out.

Emitting the roar of a dragon, the Jade Dragon Sword flew out to meet Yan Xu.

Ah Hu’s injuries had not fully recovered, but he also simultaneously unleashed an attack in conjunction with Yan Zhaoge to intercept the oncoming Yan Xu and Ye Jing.

Yan Xu let out a cold laugh, “At just your level, you dared to pursue this old man.”

“Yan Zhaoge, your path these days have been too smooth. You really cannot see the enormity of the heavens and the vastness of the earth anymore.”

As he was speaking, Yan Xu flicked out with his palm, a light appearing within.

A blue light flashed as a concealed sabre appeared that shot forward to clash with Jade Dragon Sword, forcing it to retreat.

The sabre overflowed with spiritual qi, as it almost seemed like it was glowing. Releasing sounds that resembled the cries of birds, it was as though it had a life of its own.

This was actually a mid-grade spiritual artifact!

Yan Xu fixed his gaze on Yan Zhaoge, his eyes brimming with murderous intent, “With your irascible temper and arrogant mindset, do you know just why you’ve been able to survive up till now?”

“If it weren’t for your family background, whether you were squeezed into a ball or pinched into a cube, it would only be up to this one’s temper.”

“Now, your father Yan Di isn’t here; nor do you have any guards. You also don’t have any other Martial Grandmasters to protect you.”

The sabre-qi in Yan Xu's hand fanned out, "Without having to worry about your father, getting rid of you will be as easy for this old man as pinching an ant to death."

Even as he spoke, the dispersed sabre-qi transformed into an enormous illusory Eight Sceneries palace lantern in mid-air.

The lantern flickered with thousands, tens of thousands of illusory scenes, which moved to envelop Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Zhaoge's expression remained placid as he calmly responded, "I have an outstanding family background which has brought me many benefits. This is something that I have never denied."

"I will not hypocritically say that being my father's and not actually mine, I feel uneasy relying on it."

"This body of mine, this flesh and blood; just what part of it was not given to me by my parents?"

"My dad having the ability, he can give me more things. These things are just like my hands or my feet – it would be wasteful of me not to utilize them."

Yan Zhaoge drew back his left hand, causing the Jade Dragon Sword to dissipate into a jade-colored light that seemed to warp the sky. "What's important right now is not how much power I've borrowed from my family background."

“Rather, what’s important is how high a peak I can reach in the future, considering my high starting point. Only this way can I repay all the benefits my family has given me.”

Yan Zhaoge regarded Yan Xu and laughed: “Regardless, if you want to kill me off under these present circumstances, it will not be so simple.”

Yan Xu let out a cold snort.

The injuries inflicted on Yan Xu by Shi Tie were so severe that they had caused his cultivation to temporarily fall by several levels. Even worse was the fact his mid-grade spiritual artifact, the Hidden Clear Sunlight Sabre, was no longer able to exhibit its full strength.

It wasn’t only him who had suffered damage.

The blade of his Hidden Clear Sunlight Sabre was dotted with numerous cracks, causing the orbiting sabre-lights to seem somewhat lacking.

The damage was so severe that had it was almost unable to contend with Yan Zhaoge’s low-grade spiritual artifact, the Jade Dragon Sword.

Yan Xu helplessly discovered that due to his injuries, he was unable to secure an advantage over his opponent in a short amount

of time.

Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu utilized a flexible battle tactic to slowly whittle their opponent.

As the fight dragged on, Yan Xu found that his injuries were affecting his strength more and more.

Yan Zhaoge asked: “You find me displeasing to the eye. Likewise, I want to help my father remove you from your Disciplinary Elder post.”

“Yet, I don’t understand why you developed murderous intent towards me. It can’t just be because I made you lose face a few times.”

Yan Xu’s hands seemed to react a bit sluggishly as he responded: “You needn’t ask this old man.”

“Today, you’re dying by my hands. This old man naturally doesn’t need to waste words on a dead man.”

“Today, if this old man can’t escape, I’ll be bringing this secret to the grave. You and Yan Di, can just keep on guessing.”

He had appeared to be distracted while speaking, but all of a sudden, his aura violently exploded out.

Yan Xu's face was suddenly overflowed with a red light as though flames had suddenly erupted.

Wind Fire Calamities, Fire Calamity.

The strength of Yan Xu that had originally been constantly declining suddenly burst forth with vigor as it began to rise abruptly.

He flourished the Hidden Clear Sunlight Sabre, but this time it was not a sabre technique that was so full of transformations like the Eight Sceneries Blade.

His sabre-qi suddenly congealed in midair, forming a startling black light.

Within the illusory heaven and earth formed by his aura-qi, all was pitch-black.

The light of stars lit up within the darkness, shockingly bringing along with it a long plume of flame.

As the stars descended, a giant meteor plummeted downwards straight towards Yan Zhaoge.

Yan Xu fully exploded out with all of his strength, resulting in this heaven shocking, earth-shaking attack fully concentrated on this one point.

Everything else seemed to disappear as Yan Zhaoge immediately concentrated his entire attention on that descending meteor.

The starlight became more and more resplendent as the plummeting meteor grew larger and larger in his field of vision.

As the sabre-qi exerted incredibly intimidating pressure, it was almost as though it had frozen his body, rendering him completely unable to move. It looked like he had no choice but to bear this strike of Yan Xu full-on.

Yan Zhaoge's expression did not change, as he suddenly said mildly: "You have a secret that you are afraid of me and my father finding out."

"That year, my Yan Family met with an accident mid-journey whilst migrating from the Zhao Region of the Thunder Domain to the Heaven Domain, and a large number of our people were killed."

"Amongst the casualties were my paternal grandparents."

"That accident had something to do with you, right?"

The seemingly unstoppable sabre strike descending from the sky slightly trembled, as it paused for a moment.

Then, it continued downwards with even more speed and aggression than before, even seeming somewhat crazed and panicked as it descended.

Yet, within that short pause, Yan Zhaoge made his move.

HSSB 96: Slapping Him Flying!

Even a rotten boat contains three jin of nails.

Although Yan Xu's injuries were extremely grave, compared to the Yan Zhaoge who was currently still only in the outer aura Martial Scholar realm, his strength was still very much superior.

And suddenly erupting at this moment, he was vicious to the extreme, using all his power in that one strike!

Yan Xu had even the Black Nightmare Armour-clad Ah Hu within his calculations.

If Ah Hu dared to help Yan Zhaoge withstand this sabre-blow, both of them would be simultaneously slain with that one move!

Yan Xu had had his heart pierced through by that one sentence of Yan Zhaoge's, which had revealed the deepest, darkest secret as well as greatest fear within his heart.

A figure intermittently flashed within his mind, that of an imposing man who bore a striking resemblance to Yan Zhaoge.

Even as he just thought of that person coming to know the truth of what had really happened that year, Yan Xu felt almost as though there was a hand constricting around his throat.

Even as his mind was greatly shaken, the worries which plagued him turned into anger and violence, as he felt that he had been stripped of his clothes and thrown naked onto the very public streets.

After Yan Xu's sabre-light paused, it quickly resumed its attack as it chopped down towards Yan Zhaoge even more vigorously and violently than before, as though it wanted to see this junior who had seen through his secrets, dismembered into ten thousand segments!

Yan Zhaoge's gaze shone with a brilliant light as he stared closely at Yan Xu.

Just when Yan Xu's sabre-light was at its strongest, Yan Zhaoge suddenly took out a gourd.

Produced with Elder Qin's Nine Treasures Ice Gourd as a base, the Glacial Dragon's Roar!

Yan Zhaoge smiled coldly before abruptly shattering the gourd, releasing the power stored within.

The resonant roar of a dragon resounded, shocking the heavens and shaking the earth.

The temperature of the surrounding area abruptly decreased, as though they had once more returned to the extreme coldness of the Ice Age.

As white mist shrouded the area, countless particles of ice and snow quickly began agglomerating right before Yan Zhaoge's eyes, actually coming together to form a massive Glacial Dragon!

The Glacial Dragon roared, soaring into the skies, its voice penetrating through the clouds, transcending the nine heavens.

Riding the winds and the clouds, mounting the sun and moon, a divinity gazing down upon the mortal realm, roaring arrogantly at the nine heavens-now, that was a true dragon!

The Glacial Dragon soared, shooting straight up into the skies, displaying the true power of a hidden dragon in its full glory as it intercepted Yan Xu's Meteor Blade!

As the two sides collided in mid-air, that terrifying sabre-light resembling a meteor plummeting towards earth, was instantly destroyed!

The Glacial Dragon also disintegrated in mid-air, transforming into frost which filled the entire sky, descending to envelop a large amount of the surrounding land in all directions, completely turning the world before their eyes into a world of ice and snow.

Yan Xu's figure reappeared before them, as frost converged, directly freezing and sealing him in mid-air.

As ice and snow intermingled, the figure of the Ye Jing who,

wanting to rush towards Yan Zhaoge, had just been attacked and hindered by Ah Hu, also slowed.

The crimson flames on his body were also momentarily extinguished as his entire person was enveloped by a layer of frost, causing him to resemble a person of ice.

The dark red ring on his finger, having also been suppressed by Shi Tie earlier, now dimmed and ceased radiating light, fusing with his flesh and blood once again.

The Glacial Dragon's Roar which Yan Zhaoge had produced with a portion of the Glacial Dragon Bone Soul had erupted with an ocean's worth of freezing ice qi within that instant.

Even if it were a Martial Grandmaster, they would also be frozen for a moment.

The Hidden Clear Sunlight Sabre within the hands of Yan Xu, surrounded by snow and ice in mid-air, flickered with a faint light.

The imposing sabre-qi surged, repeatedly attempting to break out of all that ice and snow as the rigid Yan Xu too sluggishly moved his own limbs, attempting to break free.

However, Ah Hu now appeared before him, grinning. Raising his hand, a cylinder appeared within it.

One end was grasped within Ah Hu's hands, while the other was

aimed straight at Yan Xu.

Yan Xu's eyeballs nearly popped out of their sockets, as the next thing he knew, his entire field of vision was filled with an all-engulfing golden light.

Like the shining rays of the sun, whilst also like a torrential rainstorm!

Unable to move, let alone evade, Yan Xu couldn't even move to block the blow. He could only open his eyes wide as he endured the full impact of the Sun Rain.

A hoarse, enraged, howl resounded as the Divine Sun Needles broke through Yan Xu's aura-qi defences, instantly riddling his entire body.

Some of the Divine Sun Needles sunk deep within Yan Xu's body while others remained only half-pierced through, as, illuminated by the dazzling golden light, Yan Xu now resembled a porcupine.

As the Divine Sun Needles entered his body, the injuries which Yan Xu had had been trying so hard to suppress earlier now erupted completely.

Yan Xu let out a miserable howl towards the sky as mists of blood erupted from his body, his entire person riddled with thousands of wounds and hundreds of holes, his flesh and blood indistinct and mangled.

A rain of ice and a rain of blood simultaneously rained down from mid-air.

“You two beasts!” Yan Xu broke out cursing, yet was stopped as fresh blood constantly surged up his throat, spilling out non-stop.

Yan Zhaoge came before Yan Xu, looking at him calmly, “Looks like the matter that year really had something to do with you.”

“The branch of the Yan Family I belong to was disliked by the main branch of the Yan Family, over at our ancestral home in the Zhao Region. While what happened that year seemed like an accident, it was most likely somewhat connected to them.”

“Seeing you scared to this extent, it must be that it had not been an unintentional failure on your part that year. Rather, you must be connected to the Zhao Region Yan Family.”

Yan Zhaoge gently stroked the blade of the Jade Dragon Sword which resembled a streak of light, “Actually, whether you had already been on good ties with them before or they just gave you some benefits, it’s also not important.”

“As long as I know that you’re courting death, that’s enough.”

“Moreover, you still tried to render me dead?”

The Yan Xu before him hissed and let out a crazed roar, struggling with his body as he lunged towards Yan Zhaoge once more!

Expressionlessly, Yan Zhaoge slashed out with his sword!

An azure light flashed through the horizon.

Bringing along with it Yan Xu's head, flying directly up into the sky!

His two eyes, staring wildly forward, showed how dying at the hands of Yan Zhaoge whose cultivation was far inferior to his, he would never be able to rest in peace!

Having slashed out with that sword, Yan Zhaoge had long since turned away, turning over to face Ye Jing.

There, within the world of ice and snow, the glow of fire lit up once more, as a human figure moved himself about with much difficulty.

Although unlike Yan Xu, who had been hit straight on by the Glacial Dragon's Roar, he had only been hit by the shockwaves of the impact, Ye Jing was currently still struggling even to move.

Looking over, Yan Zhaoge saw that Ye Jing's entire body was currently completely surrounded by flames.

The crimson patterns of flame on his body were moving and coiling rampantly about his entire body as they liked.

Ye Jing exuded an intimidating aura, dissimilar to how he had been previously as power stemming from the qi ocean within his dantian erupted from all the orifices of his body.

At this moment, the source of his strength seemed to be the patterns of flame which had already completely enveloped his entire body.

A shocking heat rose up from him in an unending wave, clashing with the surrounding world of ice and snow.

White water vapour condensed all around, resembling mistlike clouds as the ice fragments as well as melted water descended to the ground in the form of a huge rain.

Looking at Ye Jing, Yan Zhaoge raised his brows slightly, “As I thought, your aura is close approaching that of the Flame Devil tribe.”

“Accompanied by you falling deeper and deeper to that technique of yours, the changes in your physique have correspondingly become more and more obvious.”

Ye Jing’s five senses had already been completely overwhelmed by the pattern of flames enveloping his body as he radiated a sense

of wild, aesthetic beauty, whilst also appearing ferocious and violent.

The wild fire seemed like it was left to run amok, it would incinerate the very heavens, expanding limitlessly till there was nothing further left in this world.

Ye Jing glared at Yan Zhaoge, “Yan—Zhao—Ge!”

Facing the sky, he let out a long howl, “You’ve harmed me time and time again, wishing to render me dead!”

“This enmity, this hatred—we cannot survive together under these same heavens!”

“On what basis was Yushao snatched away by you?”

“On what basis are you always loftily above?”

“On what basis is it that you don’t have to put in any effort whatsoever, yet can achieve results that others would be hard pressed to reproduce in their entire lifetime?”

“On what basis is it that while you obviously tried to kill me in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, those of Broad Creed Mountain are all on your side?!”

“Was all of this fated? Is it all the arrangements of the Heavens? I

spit on it!” Resembling two otherworldly clumps of ghostly flame, the light within Ye Jing’s eyes flickered, “I don’t trust fate! I don’t trust the Heavens! I only trust myself!”

“I want to become strong; if I were strong, Yushao wouldn’t have left with you!”

“If I were strong, I would definitely stomp you down within the mud!”

“If I were strong, others wouldn’t all lean towards you just because of that dog Elder father of yours!”

“If I were strong, in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, I would have seen you dead, rather than seen myself harmed by you!”

“If you wanted to kill me, I’d kill you! If Broad Creed Mountain wanted to protect you, I’d destroy Broad Creed Mountain!”

“Either you’d die, or I’d perish!”

Ye Jing howled madly, transforming into a blazing figure as he hurtled towards Yan Zhaoge!

Not even blinking once, the orifices of Yan Zhaoge’s entire body shook as his aura-qi surged.

It transformed into a massive palm, sending Ye Jing flying with a

single slap!

“Boom!!”

As the loud boom resounded, Ye Jing was directly slapped flying!

Yan Zhaoge rotated his neck a little, “The wind’s too strong; what you said, I couldn’t hear.”

HSSB 97: This Yan Wants You Dead At Midnight, Who Can Keep You Alive Till Dawn!

The acupoints of Yan Zhaoge's entire body shook together.

The chaotic qi within his dantian split into two, one yin one yang, one cold one hot.

The remnant pure, refined Glacial Dragon qi still stored within his pore and the power of the Li Yan fire intermingled, transforming into numerous ice and fire dragons, rushing out of his body.

The ice dragons and the fire dragons intermingled, forming bones, forming meridians, forming flesh and blood.

A massive palm appeared before Yan Zhaoge.

The Ye Jing who had just been sent flying by Yan Zhaoge with a single slap lay twitching on the ground, half of his body shattered.

Looking at him, Yan Zhaoge saw him crying out in shock as he struggled non-stop.

That dark red ring seemed to glow once again as from within resounded a wild howl that seemed to originate from ages long past, penetrating through the infinite spectrum of time!

Rather than gushing out with blood, large amounts of flame began surging out from the wounds on Ye Jing's broken half of his body.

The flames gradually converged, forming into the shape of Ye Jing's body once again.

Ye Jing's body shook before he quickly jumped up from the ground, rushing towards Yan Zhaoge with a speed even greater than before!

The low, manic voice which was emitted from his mouth did not utter the language of humans, being foreign while also ancient, strange while also profound.

Ye Jing's palm pushed forward, the flames surrounding his body forming a crimson light, violent and swelteringly hot.

Where the crimson light touched, every single thing within the heavens and earth, even the very air itself, actually seemed to begin burning.

All existences became fuel for these flames, assisting the fire in becoming more and more ferocious, expanding unceasingly as it continued to devour everything in its path.

The blazing fire was merciless, incinerating and exterminating all living beings!

As the crimson light shone, like the blade of a sword, it chopped down towards Yan Zhaoge!

This was already not one of the potent martial arts that Ye Jing had cultivated in before; it wasn't even a martial art possessed by this world of human martial practitioners!

While Ye Jing's innards themselves felt like they were on fire, at this moment, he could only feel that he was strong as he had never been before.

He had never felt as refreshing as this; his hopes of defeating Yan Zhaoge, were real as they had never been before...

“Peng!!”

But not even waiting for Ye Jing to continue relishing that taste, with the massive hand formed of his aura-qi with the help of the gourd earlier, Yan Zhaoge slapped out with his palm once more!

The next instant, Ye Jing sent flying by Yan Zhaoge with a single slap once more!

Yan Zhaoge tilted his head slightly, “Chosen One?”

Ye Jing lay on the floor, resembling a fish that had been separated from its water source as he flopped and struggled,

glaring at Yan Zhaoge with a pair of fiery red eyes.

Even his pupils seemed as though they were about to begin blazing with flame.

Yan Zhaoge, however, did not look at him, instead surveying their surroundings.

“The Ghost Hatchet Elder you shouldn’t have any hopes of, but at this time, do you think that another Martial Grandmaster will suddenly jump out to save you? Or a beautiful girl, the damsel come to save the hero?”

“Actually, I had wished since long ago for you to be taken in by the Sacred Sun Clan or Infinite Boundless Mountain, especially the former.”

“Previously in the Sealing Dragon Abyss, seeing that ring of yours, I had already suspected that it was connected to the Flame Devil Emperor.”

Yan Zhaoge smiled, “At that time, the differences between you and the Flame Devils were still rather great. If the Sacred Sun Clan had had an oversight and only looked highly upon you for your body of fire, good for cultivating in their martial arts, perhaps they would really have taken you in.”

“At that time, the mine would have been successfully buried.”

“However, you courted death more and more,” Yan Zhaoge’s smile turned colder and colder, “Leaving you in this world—seriously, it would be equivalent to tainting the very air itself.”

“Since you court death, let me send you along on your path.”

A cold, indifferent expression on his face, Yan Zhaoge walked towards Ye Jing step by step.

Every step that landed, the earth seemed to tremble as that massive palm formed of his aura-qi above him became more and more condensed and tangible, also more and more massive and terrifying!

Entities of power, some cold as ice, some blazing hot guarded by Yan Zhaoge’s side as they resembled a horde of dragons, as it was like a divinity had descended upon this simple earth.

Decisiveness flickered within Ye Jing’s eyes as he howled angrily, “Dog, even if I die, I will drag you down along with me!”

As he howled, Ye Jing struggled as he extended his palm with that dark red ring.

The ring had already completely transformed into a circle of red light, slotting itself on his finger.

Within the circle of light were scenes of a burning hell of flowing lava, as an illusory giant of blazing flame was vaguely revealed

once again, seemingly roaring angrily towards the sky.

Having been greatly damaged by Shi Tie, the power of this ring had also weakened greatly. Now, Ye Jing was actually planning to activate and unleash it with his own life force!

“Flame Devil leaves the body! Incinerate the Heavens and the Earth!”

With the hand on which he was wearing that dark red ring, Ye Jing actually pierced down directly towards his own chest!

The dark red ring sunk into Ye Jing's body which was now already almost completely composed of flame, before within his body, a dazzling radiance abruptly lit up!

It was no longer the red light of flames, but rather bright, white light!

A piercing white light was emitted directly from within Ye Jing's body that was composed of flame as these leaping flames suddenly seemed to solidify at this very moment.

Next, cracks began gradually appearing on Ye Jing's body as though it was made of porcelain.

Within the cracks, the white light grew more and more dazzling, the destructive force emanating from within becoming more and more distinct!

Seeing this scene, Yan Zhaoge chuckled.

Not avoiding or evading, the massive palm above his head formed of his aura-qi, still just descended as it slammed downwards!

“Boom!!!”

As the massive boom resounded, the white light that had yet to erupt, was extinguished!

With a single palm, Yan Zhaoge slammed Ye Jing’s entire person down into the ground!

With the two of them at their centre, the surrounding hundred metres of land all collapsed, caving inwards as a deep, gigantic crater was formed!

Yan Zhaoge stepped into the air, silently standing in the sky above the deep crater as he lowered his head to look into it.

“A mere little ghost, and you still think fit to call yourself a devil?”

“You really think that you are the Flame Devil Emperor?”

At the bottom of the deep crater was a figure which almost didn’t

seem human any longer, as it resembled the remnant ashes following a huge fire.

His legs had completely vanished along with one of his arms, only leaving behind a single arm, a ring riddled with cracks still worn upon its finger.

His entire body's skin resembled burnt charcoal.

Only some dark red patterns could still be seen, glowing with light in intermittent intervals as they resembled an ember in the ashes that had still yet to been completely extinguished.

A Ye Jing whose face was black as charcoal glared at the Yan Zhaoge above him, weak and powerless as he had never been before, though the hatred as well as anger within his gaze was also intense as it had never been before!

Because of that palm of Yan Zhaoge's, the surrounding earth collapsed and sunk in all around, shaking and rumbling unceasingly as it seemed as though an earthquake had been triggered.

With that deep crater as their centre, a series of massive cracks began spreading out in all directions.

Amidst the quaking, the land beneath the deep crater seemed as though it was going to collapse a step further, the sound of flowing water audible as though there was an underground river surging

beneath.

Ye Jing's body slumped downwards, about to fall into the underground river.

Streams of miasma surged up into the sky from within, seemingly able to consume metal and corrode iron as they obstructed Yan Zhaoge's path.

Ye Jing hissed, "You dog Yan Zhaoge, as long as there is breath left within my lungs, I will definitely have it out with you! I..."

Ye Jing's words not finished, Yan Zhaoge had already descended as he activated the Heaven-Thwarting Mantra, completely not fearing the miasma, instantly arriving right before him!

Yan Zhaoge shot him a sideways glance, "Main Character halo?"

"When someone wants to kill you, a situation arises. Failing in their attempt, you escape, successfully mastering a godly ability and coming back to exact your vengeance?"

"You didn't die in the Sealing Dragon Abyss because I had no intention of killing you in the first place. Now, however..."

The massive palm formed of aura-qi above Yan Zhaoge's head, slammed downwards once more!

“This Yan wants you dead at midnight, who can keep you alive till dawn!”

As his palm descended, Ye Jing’s enraged howl, abruptly, stopped!

“Boom!”

As the massive boom resounded, completely and utter destruction!

The faint silhouette of a soul, completely and utterly destroyed!

The soul flying and the spirit scattering, to complete and utter, eternal, damnation!

HSSB 98: A Great Harvest

As that palm landed, it was as though strange scenes departing from the ordinary had appeared before Yan Zhaoge's eyes.

It was as though the qi flow of the heavens and the earth could be seen, all coming together to give their support to Ye Jing.

When the times, the heavens and the earth give power together, the luck of the heavens and the earth do converge.

And with that one palm of his, the qi flow of the heavens and the earth gradually dissipated, turning illusory alongside the surging of the clouds and the rising of the wind.

“When the times, the heavens and the earth give power together, which lucky hero doth not possess freedom?”

Yan Zhaoge let out a carefree laugh as he gently blew towards that ethereal scene.

The winds surged along with the remnant clouds, as that illusory luck of the heavens and the earth was blown away and scattered as easily as simple smoke.

The deep crater before Yan Zhaoge's eyes was still continuing to collapse. Ye Jing having been turned into dust by that palm of his, only that mottled dark red ring still remained, which fell downwards towards the underground river.

“Disappearing just like this; who knows when it will recover its vitality, seeing the sky and the sun once more, taking the form of a fortuitous encounter for yet another hot-blooded youth, giving it a chance to soar up once again, a golden finger that defies the heavens wherever it points, achieving yet another legend and myth...”

Yan Zhaoge curled the corner of his mouth, “...As if.”

Making a grabbing motion with his palm, he sucked the dark red ring from mid-air into it with the help of his aura-qi.

Stepping into the air, exerting a little bit of strength with his foot, Yan Zhaoge’s figure rose from the bottom of the deep crater, flying outside of it.

Ah Hu came up to meet him, “Young Master.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, “Collect Yan Xu’s body well, and also his belongings.”

Ah Hu gave a simple and honest laugh, “Hehe, Young Master, you don’t have to tell me that. His belongings-I took them all the moment I could.”

Yan Zhaoge curled his lips, “En, I have always trusted you on that.”

Ah Hu said, “Young Master, I’ve glanced through, and there really are quite a few good things inside!”

“What a pity that most of them, like that mid-grade spirit artifact of his, are damaged; that must have been caused by that attack of Elder Shi’s.”

Yan Zhaoge sighed, “That’s only to be expected; otherwise, we also wouldn’t have been able to take care of him that easily.”

“However, at the very least, there should still be some rewards,” Yan Zhaoge perked himself up.

As a Principal Elder of a territory, Yan Xu’s private stash was rather abundant.

He would not carry many of these belongings along with him, rather keeping them safe within his own private residences.

The things that he had on him were either something that he had urgent need of recently, or something that could help him increase his current combat ability.

While there was a shortage of artifacts as well as spirit artifacts, as the Principal Elder of Broad Creed Mountain, one of the few Sacred Grounds of this world, the powerful weapons that were suited for someone of Yan Xu’s cultivation would naturally not be lacking.

Besides that mid-grade spirit artifact, the Hidden Clear Sunlight Sabre, Yan Xu also had two accompanying low-grade spirit artifacts.

Although neither of them was as powerful as the Hidden Clear Sunlight Sabre, they both still had their own subtle uses.

A protective light armour-while unlike Ah Hu's Black Nightmare Armour, it did not possess dual functions in being able to both attack and defend, it was not inferior in terms of defensive ability.

A green belt-specifically made to coordinate with the Wind Calamity of Broad Creed Mountain's Wind Fire Calamities, causing martial practitioners to be like tigers given wings when executing the Wind Calamity movement techniques.

These two low-grade spirit artifacts having fallen into Yan Xu's hands, unleashing their true power under normal circumstances, their use would definitely be extremely great.

A pity that whether it was Yan Xu or them, they were completely not on the same level of power as Shi Tie at all.

Earlier, when Yan Xu had wanted to escape, he had directly activated the power of the green belt to withstand Shi Tie's blow, whereas the light armour had automatically moved to protect him.

As a result, the two low-grade spirit artifacts had suffered the same fate as their owner and been damaged.

Looking at them now, they were riddled with cracks, from which spiritual qi was leaking out unceasingly. Let alone not being able to use them, they were about to be completely destroyed.

The extent of their damage was even more severe than it was for the Hidden Clear Sunlight Sabre.

Especially that light armour; while it had been unable to perform its function when Ah Hu had attacked Yan Xu with the Sun Rain earlier, it had still suffered a portion of the damage from that attack.

A little pained, Ah Hu said, “But it’s a spirit artifact.”

Having followed by Yan Di’s side since young, his vision was far broader than that of others. However, seeing a spirit artifact damaged to this extent, he still felt that it was a pity.

Yan Zhaoge scrutinised the artifacts for a moment, then, not saying a word, rummaged through Yan Xu’s belongings, from which he retrieved a few crystalline rocks in the form of ice.

Ah Hu looked, “Young Master, these seem to be the Suppressive Ice Rocks which martial practitioners use to temporarily suppress and treat their injuries.”

“Get me some Caltrop Flower Grass,” Yan Zhaoge said as he crushed the Suppressive Ice Rocks.

Ah Hu was somewhat puzzled, his entire brain full of question marks.

He did have Caltrop Flower Grass on him, but such spirit grass primarily only served as a guiding drug for the medicinal properties of a few unique medicines.

Whether it was the Caltrop Flower Grass or the Suppressive Ice Rocks, both were only used by the living. Neither could help in the refining of artifacts.

However, he still did as was asked of him, giving Yan Zhaoge some Caltrop Flower Grass.

Receiving the Caltrop Flower Grass, Yan Zhaoge clapped out with his palms. The spirit grass dried up, and he crushed their leaves to dust, adding it to the fine powder that was left of the Suppressive Ice Rocks.

As the two met, a green smoke was gradually emitted from their mix as they actually began burning up on their own.

Yan Zhaoge waved his hands, and the blazing flames landed on those spirit artifacts of Yan Xu's.

While they still remained weak, the outflow of spiritual qi gradually stopped as it ceased to leak out.

Yan Zhaoge nodded, “Some emergency treatment will have to do for now. Afterwards, put them back in the Internal Crystal Furnace and refine them once more, and they will have a chance of recovering. Now, at the very least, we can be assured they won’t be completely destroyed.”

Ah Hu stared till his eyes saw stars, “Young Master, this...this...”

Yan Zhaoge appeared as though there was totally nothing out of the ordinary at all, “In this boundless world, countless wonders abound. In our daily lives, we should try to gather up all those various minor bits of general knowledge as well as little methods of doing things that we encounter. Who knows, they might come in useful sometime.”

Ah Hu opened his mouth wide for quite a few moments before finally closing it again, as he now exclaimed with a fawning look on his face, “Young Master, you’re really a genius!”

Yan Zhaoge rolled his eyes, “Your expression is too fake.”

Ah Hu chortled happily.

Yan Zhaoge shook his head, his attention falling on yet another of Yan Xu’s belongings.

As opposed to his spirit artifacts which were currently damaged and unable to be used, this thing actually drew Yan Zhaoge’s attention even more.

“Oh, how rare; Yan Xu actually has one of these things?” Yan Zhaoge’s eyes shone as he beheld a red orb within his palm that was bright red as blood, clear as crystal.

Within the bloodred orb, it was as though there was a liquid substance constantly flowing about.

The orb faintly emanated a bit of yin qi as well as baleful qi.

Ah Hu’s large head squeezed over, looking at it from quite some time before he asked hesitantly, “Young Master, isn’t this thingy a Blood Refining Orb?”

Yan Zhaoge nodded, “That’s right, it is precisely a Blood Refining Orb.”

The Blood Refining Orb was a rare, unique treasure. It only had a slight possibility of being found in battlefields which were like hell on earth, where blood flowed into rivers.

This was one of the favourites of martial practitioners who trained in the demonic arts. However, the Blood Refining Orb itself was actually not bloody and brutal, only being a crystallisation of the purest of yin qi and blood qi.

Demonic martial practitioners could use it to cultivate, whereas normal martial practitioners, when heavily injured, could also use it to replenish their qi and blood.

It was only that absorbing the Blood Refining Orb required one to be seated in the meditative position for a rather long period of time. Having been murderously pursued by Yan Zhaoge so closely, Yan Xu had not had the time to do so.

“This thing’s greatest function is actually that it can be used to refine a Blood Devil Plate; just that I’m not sure whether in this time and age, there is still anyone who knows that this can be done.”

“Unexpected gains; what a great harvest, what a great harvest.”

Smiling, Yan Zhaoge happily kept the Blood Refining Orb well.

He checked over the other valuable items as well as precious medicines that Yan Xu had on him, collecting all of them.

Next, Yan Zhaoge took out the dark red ring that he had obtained from Ye Jing.

HSSB 99: The Fire Seed Within His Dantian

Yan Zhaoge rubbed the ring that was riddled with cracks.

This ring had been in the form of light earlier, even having merged into Ye Jing's body. Now, it had regained its true form once more.

It was only that the ring which had originally been dazzling and eye-catching like flames was currently dim and completely without light as it appeared filled with dust, as well as extremely mottled.

Numerous cracks riddled the exterior of the ring, resembling spiderwebs as the ring looked as though it could shatter at any moment.

However, holding the ring within his hand, Yan Zhaoge could still vaguely feel the blazing heat contained inside of it.

Yan Zhaoge narrowed his eyes, focusing his mind to gradually sink within the ring.

The scene before his eyes instantly changed.

First was pitch darkness. Next, in that darkness where one would be unable to see even their own outstretched hand, a glow suddenly lit up.

The glow was actually extremely weak, only a faint line of light. However, because the surrounding environment was completely dark, even that one line of light appeared extremely dazzling and eye-catching.

Looking over carefully, it seemed to be but a mere spark of fire, flickering with a crimson red glow.

The spark slowly grew bigger and bigger, the light of the fire correspondingly blazing brighter and brighter as it gradually expanded into a small ember.

The flame blazed stronger and stronger, its strength increasing more and more, from a small ember, turning into a large, dominating fire that surged high into the skies, till eventually, it had formed an infinite sea of flames.

At the end, the darkness had completely vanished, the glow of fire illuminating the heavens and the earth as all before them was completely a world of flame.

All other objects no longer existed, only leaving behind a burning flame blazing through the heavens.

Yan Zhaoge calmed himself down, slowly proceeding through the sea of flames, feeling the concept from which their strength stemmed.

All around him was blazing fire, but observing the area carefully,

he could feel that although the flames were all around, they were not chaotic and unordered.

Like the tides of seawater, the flames too possessed their own pulse and natural direction of flow.

Scrutinising and pondering on it carefully, Yan Zhaoge gradually came to an understanding.

The surrounding flames engulfing this world which had originally appeared chaotic, now seemed to take form before Yan Zhaoge's eyes.

The flames seemed to have solidified into strange characters, lining up and arranging themselves into innumerable rows of words before intersecting and moving past one another, flowing non-stop within the air, layer and layer stacked upon one another.

As Yan Zhaoge looked at these words, the corners of his mouth gradually curved upwards, "Words from before the Great Calamity, created by the Flame Devil Emperor."

"Although I have not specifically done any research into it before, I am still familiar with some general laws about this. Half-guessing and half attempting blindly, I can also come to understand these contents."

"As expected, it is indeed the legacy of the Flame Devil Emperor."

Yan Zhaoge didn't know whether he should laugh or he should cry, "As a person of the Eight Extremities World, having come into possession of such a legacy, I now really don't know if I should say that Ye Jing was lucky or unlucky."

Carefully scanning over these strange characters, also comprehending the concept behind their power, Yan Zhaoge gradually achieved some understanding within his heart.

"As expected, it is very different from the current cultivation methods of the Flame Devil tribe. As an expert from before the Great Calamity, part of the Flame Devil Emperor's legacy also included the 'One Dao Birthing Many' technique."

"Borrowing the one dao of fire, and from it birthing numerous concepts."

Yan Zhaoge thought, "It was only that accompanied by the changes in Ye Jing's mental state, his cultivation methods began leaning towards that of the current Flame Devil tribe more and more."

The flames coiled up, gradually forming a massive sealed door.

Feeling it, Yan Zhaoge unconsciously retreated from the world of flames, returning to reality.

He activated the spiritual energy of the seed of Li Yan True Fire, leading it to enter the ring as the ring which was riddled with

cracks, as though being nourished, flickered slightly with a faint red light.

Yan Zhaoge's consciousness descended into it once more. Now, he saw that the sealed door had already opened.

Within the door, the sky was completely dark red in colour, lava erupting forth from within the earth and spraying about in all directions.

The scene of the end of the world which he had seen previously, once again appeared before Yan Zhaoge's eyes.

The all-encompassing flames slowly solidified within the air, gradually forming the illusory image of a massive divinity of flame, ancient and powerful.

An air of great calamities, great destruction, great suffering emanated from him, desolate and ancient, completely different from the style of the Eight Extremities World today.

It was only that because it had been damaged first by Shi Tie and then again by Yan Zhaoge, the ring was currently abnormally weak.

Whether it was the dark red sky or the lava-filled earth, this world of flame was riddled with numerous pitch-black cracks, the very space seeming as though it might collapse at any moment.

While the aura of that massive divinity of flame still spoke of the strength of its origins as well as background, looking at it now, it also seemed much more mistlike and illusory than before.

Yan Zhaoge met the gaze of that massive divinity of flame. Within its gaze, it was as though real emotions had surfaced.

The powerful lifeform seemed like it was a true existence of this world, rather than just a sliver of aura, a mere shadow of its former self.

Meeting its gaze, Yan Zhaoge felt as though his emotions were slightly thrown into turmoil.

He became very temperamental and unstable, an irritable feeling welling up within its heart as he only wanted to destroy and vent.

Yan Zhaoge's gaze flickered as he stabilised his mind. Those violent negative emotions were instantly quelled.

The all-encompassing flames once again took the form of numerous strange, ancient characters, lining themselves up before Yan Zhaoge's eyes.

Staring at these characters, Yan Zhaoge slowly deciphered, "Sacred Heavenly Fire Scripture...is it?"

As he continued deciphering them, these lines of characters transformed into numerous streaks of flame, flowing within Yan

Zhaoge's body.

Yan Zhaoge could only feel that the meridians of his entire body had become scorching hot as a result, as the remnant pure, refined qi of the Li Yan True Fire that still resided within all his pores grew more and more restless.

It was as though countless heaps of firewood had come into contact with a spark, wanting to blaze up together all at once.

Yan Zhaoge's expression was calm as within his dantian's qi ocean, the chaotic mass of qi that was concealed beneath layers and layers of clear qi abruptly rotated in reverse.

The scorching hot feeling permeating throughout his entire body instantly found a goal, as like a hundred rivers entering an ocean, it converged in the direction of the chaotic mass of qi within Yan Zhaoge's dantian all at once.

The streams of heat finally condensed into a fire seed within the chaotic mass of qi that flickered with the dim glow of fire.

The clear qi produced through the Clear Qi Profound Art converged slowly, as that chaotic mass of qi came to be concealed once more.

Yan Zhaoge smiled. Of the supreme secret scriptures that had been stored within the Divine Palace, he had chosen to cultivate in the Peerless Heavenly Scripture. Other than how powerful it was,

one of the major reasons for this was a special, major characteristic that it possessed.

Chaos is peerless. It has no beginning and no end, being able to tolerate all things, birth all things, exterminate all things.

The strongest point of the Peerless Heavenly Scripture was its extreme tolerance, being able to store, accumulate and in effect assimilate other martial scriptures into itself while not revealing any traces of this whatsoever, moreover even being able to emulate as well as switch between said possessed arts after the assimilation was complete.

Like Broad Creed Mountain's direct lineage Clear Qi Profound Art.

Like this Sacred Heavenly Fire Scripture.

In cultivating in it, he naturally wouldn't become like Ye Jing.

Yan Zhaoge nodded slightly. The Sacred Heavenly Fire Scripture indeed had its unique areas.

It just so happened that it would also be useful in his upcoming experiments.

As he returned to the world of reality, Ah Hu was currently standing by the side, gazing into the distance.

Yan Zhaoge kept the ring, himself also gazing into the distance.

There, an inverted massive dark, black hemisphere engulfed the boundless heavens and the earth. It was precisely the unique Twilight Dark Moon domain of the Sacred Sun Clan's Twilight Lord.

Within the hemisphere, a glazed golden light was flashing interminably.

As time passed, the glazed golden light had been getting brighter and brighter. Now, it began penetrating out from the hemisphere.

Finally, cracks appeared on the top of the hemisphere as it began to shatter, a golden light rising to the heavens!

A faint figure could be seen at its centre, seemingly rising slowly into the air!

"Eldest apprentice-uncle really is eldest apprentice-uncle," Yan Zhaoge praised as the Ah Hu beside him nodded repeatedly in agreement.

Still, Ah Hu's expression soon changed as he turned to look elsewhere into the distance.

From there, there seemed to be a powerful domed aura currently

approaching, obscuring the heavens and covering the earth!

From the fist intent it contained, it was evidently someone from the Sacred Sun Clan.

The newcomer's cultivation, was even higher than the Twilight Lord's!

Ah Hu said in a low tone, "I'm afraid that, it's that grandfather of Xiao Shen's."

Yan Zhaoge similarly looked towards it, a distant look on his face.

HSSB 100: Things Get More And More Major!

A terrifying and powerful aura, resembling the boundless sky and the boundless sea, slowly appeared in the distance.

In the distant horizon, a dazzling golden light shone, resembling the sun rising from the east at dawn.

Touched by that glow, the domain of black night caused by the Twilight Dark Moon of the Twilight Lord which had originally already begun shattering appeared even more fragile than before.

The black night finally passed, the sun rising into the sky as all was bright once more.

Yan Zhaoge looked into the distance, murmuring, “The legacy of the Sacred Sun Clan; the cultivation of a Transcending Mortality Martial Grandmaster.”

The fourth and final stage of the Martial Grandmaster realm was known as the Transcending Mortality stage.

Transcending Mortality, Entering Sainthood.

Having stepped into this realm meant that a martial practitioner could officially begin preparing for their breakthrough into the Martial Saint realm.

Generally speaking, like martial practitioners at the peak of the Martial Scholar realm, the Heavenly Connection stage, most Transcending Mortality Martial Grandmasters would go into secluded cultivation to prepare for their breakthrough.

Transcending Mortality experts were seldom active within the world, most of them holing up somewhere to cultivate, hoping to step past that final boundary of the mortal realm, instantly achieving Sainthood!

Achieving Sainthood did not only entail a great leap in power; a martial practitioner's longevity would also increase greatly as a result.

Therefore, Transcending Mortality Martial Grandmasters were seldom active.

But at this very moment, right before Yan Zhaoge's eyes, it seemed like a Transcending Mortality Martial Grandmaster had actually descended!

"Pan Botai, Grand Elder of the Sacred Sun Clan," Yan Zhaoge said slowly, "The West Tilting Lord of the first generation of the Seven Reigning Suns, having retired upon stepping into the Transcending Mortality stage, passing his position down to the next generation."

"Xiao Shen's grandfather; it should be him all right."

Yan Zhaoge said leisurely, “Amongst Transcending Immortality Martial Grandmasters, he can be considered one of the more active ones, occasionally making an appearance in the world.”

Ah Hu said with a pained expression on his face, “Young Master, Elder Shi already may not be able to handle this old monster, not even considering the fact that there is still the Twilight Lord by the side.”

Yan Zhaoge nodded slightly. Now, a figure flickered as an emaciated old man appeared before him. It was precisely that Broad Creed Mountain Elder who had helped him to hold off the Martial Grandmaster of the Sacred Sun Clan as well as the Ghost Hatchet Elder through his Golden Curtain Palm earlier.

Looking at Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu and also the decapitated head of Yan Xu, the emaciated Elder was slightly surprised.

After all, at the end of the day, Yan Xu had still been a Martial Grandmaster expert, his cultivation not inferior to that of the emaciated Elder himself in the slightest.

Although he had been heavily injured by Shi Tie earlier, a weak, dying camel is still bigger than a horse. However, Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu had actually been able to kill him without paying any price at all.

The injuries on Ah Hu’s body were still those caused by Xiao Shen’s sneak attack with the Sun Rain previously in the Spirit

Wind Canyon.

All this falling into the emaciated Elder's eyes, there was no way he could not mind it.

If it was said that they had borrowed the power of spirit artifacts, Yan Xu himself also possessed some. Even though it had similarly been badly damaged by Shi Tie earlier, with the mid-grade spirit artifact, the Hidden Clear Sunlight Sabre, in terms of weaponry, Yan Xu still actually wouldn't have been at a disadvantage.

The emaciated Elder had quickly shook off his opponents and rushed over here, having originally believed that it would already be a victory as long as Yan Zhaoge and Ah Hu could take advantage of Yan Xu's injuries to decrease the speed of his escape.

Who knew that in the end, the final result was that Yan Xu had been cleanly and decisively killed by the two.

The emaciated Elder shot Yan Zhaoge a sigh, "Even if you want to leave now, it's too late. Pan Botai is specifically here for you."

Mentioning the name of Pan Botai, the emaciated Elder's voice was also somewhat grave.

The name of a person, the shadow of a tree. Pan Botai was a longtime Elder of the Sacred Sun Clan, hailing from the same generation as the East Coming Martial Saint 'The Sun Comes East' Huang Guanglie as well as Broad Creed Mountain's old Clan Chief

‘Heaven Equalling’ Yuan Zhengfeng.

As a well-known expert amongst all Martial Grandmasters, he had risen to prominence many years ago, his achievements in battle splendid, and even stepped into the Transcending Mortality stage.

The pressure that he brought to others was naturally not something that the likes of the Twilight Lord and the East Rising Lord could compare with.

The gaze with which the emaciated Elder looked at Yan Zhaoge held some slightly complicated emotions.

Although he had reinforced Yan Zhaoge in a timely manner earlier, helping him to hold off the Martial Grandmaster of the Sacred Sun Clan, not showing any signs of fear before the enemy in the least, about Yan Zhaoge having killed Xiao Shen, the emaciated Elder still held some reservations.

Seeing the Elder’s gaze, Yan Zhaoge got a general idea of what he was thinking.

In Broad Creed Mountain, there existed a trend of thought that it would be best for them to avoid conflict with the Sacred Sun Clan as much as possible, silently accumulating their power as they waited for the chance to rise up once again.

When necessary, it was actually even fine for them make some

concessions, just making sure as much as possible that their core interests were not compromised.

Amongst the longtime Elders of the clan, of the older generation, most thought this way.

The emaciated Elder before him, was also one of them.

As for the senior generation with Yan Di and Shi Tie at their head, most of them instead advocated the aggressive, progressive way.

Because the Sacred Sun Clan's incursions had been getting more and more unbridled and without reservation in recent years.

As they saw it, being conservative and making concessions was equivalent to being satisfied with letting the Sacred Sun Clan slowly cut their flesh and let out their blood with a knife.

Not only would they not be able silently accumulate their power the way the older generation wanted, on the contrary, they would be stagnant and unmoving, or even moving backwards.

Even if they didn't move backwards, at a time when the Sacred Sun Clan as well as the other Sacred Grounds were all constantly increasing in strength, they themselves remaining stagnant would be like trying to row a boat against the flow of the currents.

The Sacred Sun Clan had never, and would never stay silently

still by the side, out of goodwill allowing Broad Creed Mountain to continue developing and chasing after them, to the point of maybe even surpassing them.

If they progressed conservatively, entrusting their hopes to the future, it would almost be like building a tower within the air, as good as handing the initiative to the other party on a platter.

If one really wanted to talk about hope, the only hope would be some momentous event such as a huge-scale invasion by the Flame Devils occurring once more.

If such a momentous event occurred, the Sacred Sun Clan would receive the most harm.

Just like what had happened to Broad Creed Mountain long ago when they had been at their peak.

But such a thing, who could accurately predict?

Yan Zhaoge's second apprentice-uncle Fang Zhun had originally been one of the few members of the senior generation from the moderate faction, also having received the support from many longtime Elders of the older generation as a result.

But in recent years, perhaps because the Sacred Sun Clan had been increasingly pressuring down insatiably upon them, or perhaps because the old Clan Chief Yuan Zhengfeng as well as Shi Tie wanted to move towards a tougher stance, Fang Zhun's

attitude had gradually become tough as well, causing those of the senior generation who had originally supported him to be greatly disappointed.

Now, other than each other, both Yan Di and Fang Zhun who were competing for the position of Clan Chief actually also had to face the pressure of the clan's longtime Elders.

The entanglements within this+ were getting more and more complicated, hard to say in a few words.

What had happened earlier in the Eastern Tang Kingdom and how it had turned out now, as well as Yan Zhaoge's taking back of Feng Yunsheng was something that the moderate faction also supported, on the precondition that Feng Yunsheng could really recover.

With regard to the Eastern Tang, their attitude was somewhat unclear. As for Yan Zhaoge having killed Xiao Shen earlier, it had really been an extreme headache for them.

Although they had to voice out the same, one stance towards the outside world, internally, towards Yan Zhaoge who could produce major contributions as well as cause major trouble at the same time, the older generation held extremely complicated feelings.

Seeing the way the emaciated Elder was struggling internally, Yan Zhaoge didn't say anything further, only asking, "Can I ask how Elder Qin and Elder Kong are now?"

The emaciated Elder replied simply, “Elder Shi arrived earlier than expected; and in coming here, he was also accompanied by many experts of our clan who then went to reinforce Elder Qin and the others, in the end defeating and driving off the East Rising Lord’s group. They are already nearby, having rushed over to meet up with Elder Shi.”

“However, with Pan Botai’s arrival, the Sacred Sun Clan seems to have risen with the momentum of a counterattack once more.”

“You are the target of all; it will be hard this time.”

Yan Zhaoge said slowly, “Killing me, would only be a beginning.”

“The other party’s goal has actually already been achieved. If not for the fact that I killed Xiao Shen, whether or not they kill me would actually be of no further importance to them.”

“It was only because I killed Xiao Shen that Pan Botai specifically made a trip here.”

As they watched, the glow in the horizon grew brighter and brighter.

On the horizon, there actually seemed to be seven suns, forming into a ring, rising up simultaneously!